

FORWARD

Journal of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought

League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)

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Introducing **FORWARD**

This is the first issue of *FORWARD*, the theoretical journal of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist). *FORWARD* is a journal of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought (Mao Tsetung). This means that it will strive to present a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the important issues facing the working class today, such as developments in the international situation, party building, the labor movement, the national movements and so on. *FORWARD* will also present articles discussing developments in the fields of culture, science, and Marxist theory, as well as pertinent historical articles. *FORWARD* will also publish summations of the mass work of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L).

During the past ten years the communist movement in the United States has made many strides forward in developing its theoretical and practical grasp of some of the important questions of the revolution. The U.S. communist movement, however, still lags behind the requirements of the struggle on the theoretical plane. *FORWARD* hopes to contribute to the theoretical development of our movement; to build on the gains made during the past ten years; and to help answer the questions which face Marxist-Leninists in the U.S. today.

We believe that *FORWARD* can help in advancing the important task of building a single, unified communist party, the central task of our movement today. By providing thoughtful, in-depth and concrete analyses of the important questions with which our movement is confronted, *FORWARD* can help contribute to the development of the political line necessary for the unity of Marxist-Leninists, a line which will clearly distinguish the Marxist-Leninists from the revisionists and opportunists. We also hope

that *FORWARD* will be a weapon for the mass work of Marxist-Leninists and advanced workers.

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In this first issue of *FORWARD*, we are publishing an interview with William Gallegos, a spokesperson for the Central Committee of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L), on the question of party building. The interview covers some questions being debated today in the communist movement.

This issue of *FORWARD* also contains an important article about developments in China following the smashing of the "gang of four," and the campaign to modernize China. This article discusses some of the most common questions raised by comrades and friends about China's economic development, socialist democracy, and other areas.

FORWARD is also printing a major article from *UNITY*, the political newspaper of the League. This article sums up the work of the League in the last postal workers' contract struggle. This article contains important lessons for U.S. Marxist-Leninists on the task of organizing within the labor movement.

The fourth article, "The Soviet Union: Prisonhouse of Nations Once Again," is a study of the national question in the Soviet Union today. The restoration of capitalism in Russia has brought back national oppression in an all-round way. Some of the manifestations of this are brought out in the essay. The article should help in further exposing the fully reactionary nature of the Soviet Union today.

Since the founding of the League a little less than a year ago, a number of communist and revolutionary organizations sent their greetings and messages of solidarity with the League. Some of these are reproduced in this journal.

The last articles are statements from the Seize the Time, East Wind, and New York Collective organizations on their unification with the League. The statements contain assessments of the work of the organizations and lessons on the history of the communist movement in the U.S. □

Interview with William Gallegos, a League Spokesperson, on Party Building in the U.S. Today

Introduction

How can Marxist-Leninists build a single, unified vanguard party of the U.S. working class? This question is the focus of intense and widespread discussion in the communist movement today. The League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist) places the construction of such a party as its central task and is committed to help bring this party into being as soon as possible.

It has been the central task of genuine Marxist-Leninists in the U.S. to reconstruct a vanguard communist party in the United States since the 1950's. At that time, the Communist Party U.S.A. (CPUSA), once a genuine Marxist-Leninist party, completely abandoned its revolutionary principles and its tradition of fighting in the interests of the working and oppressed masses. The degeneration of the CPUSA was consolidated in the 1950's when the Communist Party of the Soviet Union became revisionist and promoted modern revisionism on a worldwide scale. The CPUSA was fully taken over by revisionism, a bourgeois trend camouflaged by Marxist phrases.

The CPUSA became a dangerous enemy of the revolutionary

people. It ridiculed the Marxist principle that the working class, in order to free itself from capitalist oppression and exploitation, must carry out a revolution to overthrow the capitalist state, seize political power and establish its own dictatorship in order to build socialism. The CPUSA instead called upon the masses to rely on capitalist law and the capitalist state, the very force that suppresses their struggles. The CPUSA preached that the masses should follow a "peaceful," "electoral" path to socialism. Consistent with this general view was the CPUSA's line that the liberation of the oppressed nationalities in the U.S. could come about solely through a series of reforms, and by rooting out racism from the minds of white workers. The CPUSA thus also abandoned the revolutionary struggle of the oppressed nationalities for full equality and an end to national oppression.

During the late 1950's and in the 1960's there were two attempts to build a genuine Marxist-Leninist party. Some former members of the CPUSA formed a Provisional Organizing Committee (POC) to build a new party. The POC, however, was torn with factionalism, plagued by dogmatism, and had little connection with the mass movement. It soon disintegrated into a sect of squabbling factions. In the 1960's, the Progressive Labor Party (at first called the Progressive Labor Movement) was formed. It was also formed by ex-members of the CPUSA. Lacking a firm grasp of Marxism-Leninism, and carrying with it many of the weaknesses of the old CPUSA, it soon fell into Trotskyite-revisionism and became an infamous counter-revolutionary group.

These failures left the masses without an organized and cohesive revolutionary leadership. But they did not end the revolutionary movement itself. In the 1960's a tidal wave of struggle engulfed the United States. As a result of the tremendous upsurge of the oppressed nationalities and the massive anti-war movement, many revolutionary fighters emerged from the oppressed nationalities, worker and student movements. The battles which they fought against the U.S. monopoly capitalists were at the same time battles against the CPUSA, the PLP, the Socialist Workers Party and other phony "communist" groups. The young revolutionaries openly proclaimed the need for revolution to overthrow the capitalist state and rejected with their words and their deeds the CPUSA's line of class conciliation, reformism and chauvinism. They opposed as well the PLP's Trotskyite line which



Marxist-Leninists increasingly are playing major roles in the mass movement. The League helped lead the struggle to save the International Hotel in San Francisco. Here, thousands joined together to form a human barricade against the police on the night of eviction, August 4, 1977. (UNITY photo)

said that national liberation struggles internationally and in the U.S. were “reactionary.” The new revolutionary elements, who were born out of mass struggles formed the backbone of the new Marxist-Leninist movement which began to develop in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s.

The embryonic communist movement took shape with the formation of several communist collectives and groups around the country. The struggle to build a new communist party got its impetus from the rebellions and heroic struggles of the previous decade.

Over the past ten years much work has been done to pave the way for the formation of the party. Since the anti-revisionist communist movement in the U.S. first took shape, the Marxist-Leninist forces have gradually, and often painfully, strengthened their grasp of the requirements of the revolutionary struggle through integrating Marxism-Leninism with the concrete conditions, and summarizing lessons from practice in the mass movements. The Marxist-Leninists have grown stronger in the course of fighting attacks by a variety of opportunist forces who promoted all sorts of “theories” using the name of Marxism to attack Marxism. Most communist forces also have succeeded in developing some roots in key sectors of the working class, in the national movements, and in the movements of women, students, youth and other sectors. In the recent period in particular, there have also been some significant developments in the struggle for communist unity among the genuine Marxist-Leninist forces.

The League recognizes that party building is a serious and difficult undertaking. Our goal is nothing less than to build the vanguard organization of the U.S. working class — the advanced detachment that embodies the experience, wisdom and highest aspirations of the proletariat; a party which can lead the revolutionary battle to overthrow the powerful system of U.S. monopoly capitalism and establish a socialist society. The communist party must be the proletariat’s ideological and political leader. It must be guided by the most advanced revolutionary theory, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought; and it must have a good understanding of the actual conditions in the U.S. and the practical tasks of making revolution in this country. The party must be made up of the most advanced revolutionary elements from the working class and other strata, and have deep ties with the masses. On the basis of democratic centralism, the party must



The League has historically worked in mass struggles, such as the anti-Bakke movement. (UNITY photo)

weld its members into a tightly knit and disciplined organization capable of carrying out the class struggle under any circumstances that will arise in the course of the revolution.

The League is confident that Marxist-Leninists can succeed in this historic effort of building a single, unified party, and we look forward to greater advances in the coming period.

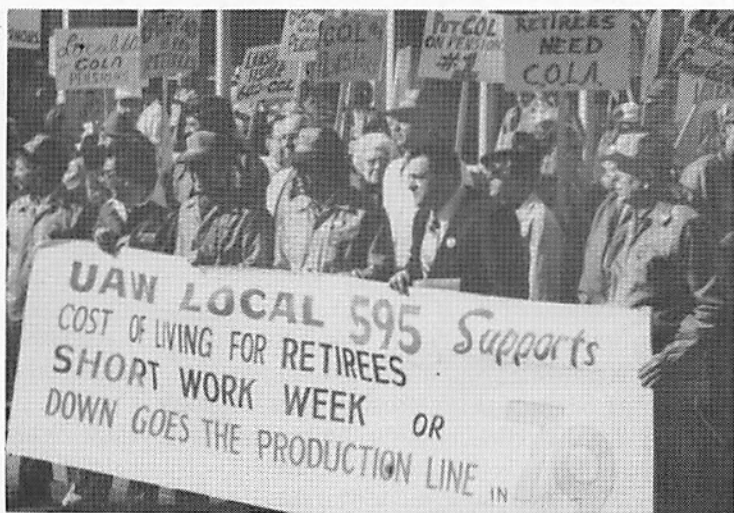
We believe that work in three basic areas must be taken up by all genuine Marxist-Leninist organizations in relation to party building. We must continue to apply the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought creatively to the specific conditions of the U.S. to develop a revolutionary line and program for the U.S. revolution. We must unite as many Marxist-Leninists as possible around this line and program. And we must build strong ties among the broad masses of people.

There is a dialectical relationship between these tasks. What links them together is the question of line. The line is decisive in the struggle to demarcate genuine Marxism-Leninism from opportunism; in the struggle to unite the ranks of the Marxist-Leninists; and in the struggle to win the leadership of the mass movements. But the line is not enough by itself. The line cannot be carried out

in the broadest possible way without the unity of Marxist-Leninists. The line itself cannot be developed, verified and enriched except through our connections with the masses. At the same time, the line enables us to deepen and strengthen our ties with the masses. While there are other aspects to party building, these three are the main ones.

In this next period, Marxist-Leninists have a great responsibility to shoulder. The growing upsurge in the mass movements and the increasingly volatile international situation call for more extensive and qualitatively better Marxist-Leninist leadership. All communist organizations, groups and individuals have to boldly help carry out work for the formation of a new Marxist-Leninist party. We must build on the foundation of the experience acquired in the past and work even harder in the next period to end the temporary state of disunity which hinders our ability to meet our revolutionary commitments to the working and oppressed masses of the U.S.

In the following interview, William Gallegos, a spokesperson and leading member of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) speaks to some specific questions being debated around party building in the U.S. communist movement today.



In April 1979 over 4,000 active and retired workers from all over the Midwest demonstrated outside the UAW Special Bargaining Convention for COLA on pensions and a shorter work week. Developing mass ties is an essential task in party building. (UNITY photo)

FORWARD: How does the League view some of the important recent developments among U.S. Marxist-Leninists, as well as among the centrists, the revisionists, and other opportunists?

WG: The question of party building and the unity of Marxist-Leninists in the United States has become an extremely critical question. Internationally the Soviets are on a rampage, and the danger of war has become very acute. The Russians pose a great threat to the sovereignty and independence of the entire world, as the recent developments in Southeast Asia make clear. Here in the United States, the monopoly capitalists are themselves waging a war — a war against the working and oppressed people of this country. The attacks on the living standards and the political rights of the people have become very sharp and there is no sign of a letup in the immediate future. Of course the masses are not standing still for these attacks. The mass struggle is developing rapidly in all sectors of society. No group of oppressed people in the U.S. is quiet these days. They are all struggling against the monopoly capitalists.

Marxist-Leninists throughout the world are confronted with a very complex situation in the class struggle. In the face of this, Marxist-Leninists of all countries are striving to strengthen their unity. In the United States, Europe, Latin America, and other parts of the world, Marxist-Leninists are attempting to unite.

Here in the United States there have been a number of significant developments among Marxist-Leninists in the past year or so. The merger of the August 29th Movement and I Wor Kuen set a positive example of principled Marxist-Leninist unity. It was a blow to the opportunists who consistently slander the Marxist-Leninists as being incapable of unity. It also showed those comrades who are pessimistic about the prospects of Marxist-Leninist unity that principled unity could be achieved through struggle.

The split in the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and the formation of the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters (RWH) took place this past year. As most people know the RCP has completely degenerated into Trotskyite-revisionism. The RWH is striving to sum up the errors and opportunism of the RCP, carry on their mass work, and establish relationships with other Marxist-Leninists.

The mergers of Seize the Time, and the East Wind organization with the League are also important steps forward for our move-

ment. Both groups have relatively long histories and deep ties among the masses. The League at one time had a number of important differences with both groups. Yet, we were able to resolve our differences and unite. This really set an example in how Marxist-Leninists should act toward each other — with mutual respect, with principle, and in the spirit of learning from each other. This development should help contribute to breaking down some of the small circle spirit which still exists in the movement.

The decision to try to establish a Committee to Unite Marxist-Leninists by the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), and the League (then ATM and IWK) was also a hopeful development for U.S. Marxist-Leninists.

In this past period there have also been more frequent discussions among the different Marxist-Leninist organizations. These discussions have not been as systematic as they should have been, but they still helped, to greater and lesser degrees, to clarify some of the unities and disunities among U.S. Marxist-Leninists.

All in all, I would say that the recent developments among Marxist-Leninists have been good, although much more remains to be done. The task of trying to unite the genuine Marxist-Leninists is made more urgent by the increasingly open and aggressive posture of the revisionist Communist Party USA. The CPUSA has become much more active in the mass movement, as can be seen through their open and active participation in the anti-Weber and other struggles. The CPUSA is stepping up its work in the labor movement, in the national movements, among women, students and youth, and so on. They are even marching openly under their own banner now — something they hadn't been able to do for years because they were so discredited.

The CPUSA's offensive coincides with a growing upsurge in the mass movement, and with the world offensive of the Soviet Union. The revisionists are working overtime to establish themselves as an effective fifth column for the U.S.S.R. in the mass movement. This is a very serious situation which calls for the Marxist-Leninists to step up their own work, their struggle for unity and their struggle to expose and isolate the CPUSA in the revolutionary movement.

Another important new development concerns the centrists. The centrist camp is going through a period of breakup right now. Their breakup is due, in part, to the inherent instability of the centrist position — of trying to stand midway between Marxism-

Leninism and revisionism. Obviously they can't take such a stand without having problems. We must make a concrete analysis of the different centrist forces in order to win over the honest elements under their influence. The breakup of the centrists has also been accelerated because of the developments in the international situation, and because of their inability to determine how to develop their work in the U.S. For instance, the centrists have taken somewhat different positions on the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea. Some have condemned it, while others have supported it.

The *Guardian* and the Philadelphia Workers Organizing Committee (PWOC) have split apart because of their differences on party building. They have conducted a debate on the "theory vs. fusion" issue, with the *Guardian* emphasizing the question of "theory." The entire debate evaded the cardinal questions of their stands towards revisionism and Soviet social-imperialism. After the *Guardian* split with PWOC, it had a further split. Irwin Silber resigned as executive editor on this issue and took some of the *Guardian* clubs with him. There is struggle also now among the forces around PWOC.

FORWARD: What potential for unity is there with the many honest individuals in the centrist camp?

WG: We think that there is a great potential to win over these forces but it will be a rather protracted process. Most of them are still deciding with which camp they will go. Some of them will return to the centrist camp, and some of them will join in with the Marxist-Leninists. No one, in our opinion, is going to win over these forces overnight. We have to adopt a patient and serious approach to winning them over, and try to answer the questions they have about party building, the international situation, and so forth, in the course of practice. Our own experience in the struggle to build the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition, in the International Hotel struggle, and in our labor work has shown us that the best way to win these people over is through practice. It takes time, and it is not always easy, but it is the best way to help them see just what Marxism-Leninism means in the real world. We don't have any illusions that the centrist camp is going to collapse right away. It will probably reconsolidate in some fashion after awhile. But communists must take all possible steps to take advantage of the current situation. There should be stepped up exposure of the revi-



The student movement in the U.S. has a militant history. Hostos, the only bilingual college on the East Coast, was the site of intense struggle in 1978, as students fought for the preservation and expansion of the school. (UNITY photo)

sionists and the *Guardian*-type line on the international situation. These efforts will help us in winning over people to the Marxist-Leninist camp.

FORWARD: *Some Marxist-Leninists think that the experience of the Marxist-Leninist movement during the past ten years has been mostly negative. What is the League's view of this?*

WG: We disagree with that view. We think that the experience of the past ten years has, on the whole, been positive and valuable. When the movement first began, its grasp of Marxism-Leninism was mostly general and shallow. Mainly it consisted of a knowledge of the general principles of Marxism, such as the need for violent revolution, proletarian dictatorship, etc. There were only a few small, scattered local collectives with little roots in the industrial proletariat. There were really no clear lines at that time between Marxism-Leninism and opportunism. In terms of organization, the groups which existed at that time were

amateurish, loose, and unable to mount any real national campaigns.

Now we have a different situation. The general theoretical level of the movement is higher, and our understanding of the important political questions is deeper and more concrete. At least three important two-line struggles have taken place in the last ten years — with the Revolutionary Union (RU), the Communist League (CL), and with the Revolutionary Wing. These struggles have greatly increased our understanding and grasp of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

The struggle with the RU around National Bulletin 13 and their line on party building in 1973, deepened the understanding of the entire movement on the national question, the danger of economism, and the importance of theory and political line in the struggle for the party.

The struggle with the Communist League in 1974 on the questions of party building, the international situation, the national question, etc. was extremely important. It brought us valuable experience in the fight against metaphysics and idealism.

The struggle with the Revolutionary Wing deepened the movements grasp of right and “left” opportunism. The struggle with the Puerto Rican Revolutionary Workers Organization taught us valuable lessons in learning from and upholding the positive aspects of the movement’s revolutionary history as well as the importance of combating “left” dogmatism.

The two-line struggle with the Workers Viewpoint Organization (WVO), which was a part of the Revolutionary Wing, further deepened our grasp of other forms of opportunism which hide behind “Marxist” posturing.

All of these struggles have helped to raise our understanding of party building, the international situation, the trade union question, the national question, etc.

Of course, the Marxist-Leninists have made mistakes over the years, but we have to distinguish between errors which come from immaturity and errors and lines which violate principle. All the Marxist-Leninist organizations have had their shortcomings, and have even at times made serious mistakes, but generally they have made much progress. Compared to ten years ago the theoretical level of our movement is much higher. Several national organizations have developed with a regular and relatively sophisticated press, and relatively strong organizational apparatuses. The

movement has developed ties in the working class and other mass movements. Struggles in auto, steel, in the post office, and in the anti-Bakke movement attest to this. The main thing is that, compared to ten years ago, our political line is more developed, is much stronger. All of this is, in our opinion, a good achievement.

FORWARD: *What have been some of the main shortcomings of the U.S. Marxist-Leninist movement regarding party building?*

WG: One of the main weaknesses has been in our ability to thoroughly defeat opportunist lines. In fact, on some occasions some Marxist-Leninist organizations have themselves been influenced by opportunist lines, because of their own weak grasp of Marxism-Leninism at the time. Of course we don't equate the errors made by these comrades with the opportunism of the RU, the CL, and the WVO, or of newer opportunist organizations like the so-called Communist Party, USA (Marxist-Leninist). The Marxist-Leninists have generally waged a good and sharp struggle with the opportunists and have much valuable experience from this struggle. But in many cases this experience has not been properly summed up so that sharper and clearer lines of demarcation can be drawn with the opportunists.

Another serious shortcoming of our movement has been sectarianism. This has happened when groups have magnified minor differences into major ones or have over-evaluated one's own contributions while belittling the work of others. Another form of sectarianism is when groups evaluate the objective conditions just from one's own experience, negating the lessons others have gained over these past ten years.

These have been obstacles to building unity in the communist movement and we hope to see an end to these weaknesses.

FORWARD: *Could you explain what the League views as some of the important differences among Marxist-Leninists?*

WG: I think that there are quite a few differences, but here I will just speak of one. This is on the national question. There has always been a lot of controversy on this question in the U.S. communist movement. This was true in the 20's and 30's, in the 50's, in the early 70's, and it is true now. The question comes down to this: Do the national movements have a great revolutionary potential, and their own revolutionary significance; or are they reducible simply to a workers question, drawing their power from

from the workers' struggle or a liberal reformist struggle?

It might help to discuss our views of national oppression. The League sees that national oppression is the bourgeoisie's systematic suppression of nationalities — economically, politically, socially and ideologically. U.S. capitalism has a history full of



The struggle against national oppression is a component part of the U.S. socialist revolution. In November 1978 over 3,500 people of all nationalities marched in Tupelo, Mississippi, for Black freedom. (UNITY photo)

national oppression — starting with the attempts to exterminate the American Indian peoples, through the enslavement of Blacks, to today's ghettos and barrios — national oppression has been a pillar of U.S. capital.

The bourgeoisie enforces this system of national oppression in order to gain extra profits from the minority peoples and to weaken the position of the entire working class. But this oppression has led to national rebellion — such as during the 1960's,

when the struggles of the oppressed nationalities shook imperialism to its foundations. The movements of the oppressed nationalities continue to deal concrete blows against the bourgeoisie.

The working class must take up and lead the fight against national oppression. It must unite with the oppressed nationality movements in common struggle against capital. In our opinion, communists must understand that the fight against national oppression is just as much a fight for the working class, minority and white, as is the fight against inflation.

There seems to be other views on this question though. Some believe that in order to win white workers to the struggle against national oppression we must appeal mostly to the way that national oppression affects their own immediate monetary interests. These comrades tend to blur over the differences between the oppressor nationality workers and the oppressed nationality workers. They say basically, "all workers suffer from national oppression, therefore we must all oppose it."

Of course, the masses of workers do not benefit from national oppression. But there is a distinction between the situation of minority and white workers which must not be blurred over. The oppressed nationalities suffer national oppression while whites do not.

Trying to appeal mostly to the immediate monetary interests of white workers is the flip side of trying to appeal to white workers to oppose national oppression on a "moralistic" basis — by trying to "guilt-trip" whites to help "poor, underprivileged minorities." This leads to approaching white workers by saying that minorities should be "uplifted" into the so-called mainstream of American society. This approach tails after liberal reformist elements who see the solution to national oppression as minorities assimilating and getting a few reforms. Reforms are important and we have to fight for them, but in a way that raises the revolutionary consciousness of the people and shows them that in the final analysis only overthrowing the system of imperialism will end national oppression.

Both views on how to win over white workers to the fight against national oppression are wrong. They both stem from basically the same error — underestimating the revolutionary power of the national movements as a component part of the proletarian revolution in the U.S. Only if you grasp the revolutionary power of the national movements and adopt a correct standpoint

on the national question can you find the correct way to win over white workers to oppose national oppression.

We must strive to win white workers over to oppose national oppression and racism on the basis that the long-term and day-to-day unity of all workers can only be built if white workers oppose the particular oppression of their fellow minority workers; on the basis that the working class opposes all injustices perpetrated by our common enemy, because the working class supports all mass struggles directed against the monopoly bourgeoisie. All mass struggles that oppose the imperialist bourgeoisie are in the material interests of the working class because they weaken the enemy class.

Particularized work should be done at times with white workers to oppose white chauvinism. But in doing such work however, communists must never liquidate the national question and/or appeal to special "white" interests. White workers have no revolutionary "national" interests apart from the general interests of the working class, and apart from the struggle against all national and class oppression. It is different for the oppressed nationality workers who have national interests which *are* opposed to those of the monopoly capitalist class.

We fundamentally also differ with the view that the entire white working class is bribed with the superprofits of imperialism. Only a small minority of workers are bribed and bought off by the imperialists. These labor aristocrats will fight to the death for imperialism. They oppose the interests of the vast majority of workers in the U.S.

The contradiction between the oppressed nationalities and the labor aristocracy is an antagonistic one and is qualitatively different than the contradiction between minority and white workers. This is a contradiction among the people. White workers, as they are part of the oppressor nationality do have certain advantages over the workers of the oppressed nationalities, such as certain political rights, language, not forced to face racism, and so on. But the masses of white workers and oppressed nationality workers are all part of the multinational working class facing the common enemy, the monopoly capitalists, and their united struggle is certain to lead the battle to end the rule of capital.

FORWARD: What steps will the League take to try to advance its work in this next period?



A single, unified communist party is necessary to link the various struggles of the masses and direct them against the capitalist system. The three year strike of the Stearns miners was an inspiration to the entire working class. (UNITY photo)

WG: One thing that we have planned is to step up our theoretical work, to try to put out fairly extensive positions on the labor question, the Chicano national question, the economic situation in the U.S., and other questions. We will also continue to publish major summations of our political work.

We plan to intensify our efforts to have more frequent and systematic discussions with other Marxist-Leninist organizations. We would like to have these discussions center on clearly defining our unities and disunities and working out a step-by-step way to resolve differences in line. We plan to pay more attention to having discussions with the smaller Marxist-Leninist collectives. Some have much valuable experience, even though they may not have developed political views on certain questions.

In this next period we also plan to expand our mass work. We now carry out work in most of the major political centers of the country, and we have been able to make quite a few breakthroughs in our work during the past year. We can do quite a bit more than we could a year ago. We want to build up more work in the strategic industries, as well as in the different national movements.

We feel a particular urgency about this because of the stepped up activities of the revisionists in the mass movement. We also plan to do more student and youth work, as well as work among women. We also plan to expand our anti-imperialist support work, our cultural work, and so on. As we have mentioned before we think that building up communist strength in the mass movements, and winning over the advanced elements from those movements is an important part of party building.

We also plan to publish *UNITY* on a weekly basis starting this year. This should also give a big boost to our party building efforts. We will be better able to develop our analysis of conditions, get out our views on important questions and sum up our work. The demands of party building and of our mass work have long called for a weekly paper. However, we have always attached great importance to the equality of languages, and we want to continue to give attention to our language editions.

Another important part of our party building efforts will be to strengthen our organization ideologically, politically and organizationally in this next period. We want to pay attention to raising the theoretical level of our organization, training new leadership, and to developing our capacity for providing rapid and extensive political leadership on a nationwide scale. We also want to summarize our work so that we can criticize and root out our shortcomings.

If we can accomplish all of these things in the next year, I think that we will be able to help contribute more to the communist movement.

***FORWARD:** The League has had the opportunity in this past year to meet with Marxist-Leninists from other countries. What were you able to learn from these discussions about party building efforts in other countries?*

WG: Recently we were fortunate enough to be able to meet with Marxist-Leninists from the Middle East, from Europe, and from Latin America. We think that these meetings were very productive. They helped to confirm for us the great strength and vitality of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. The Marxist-Leninists parties and organizations with whom we met generally have a good grasp of the situation in their respective countries and are building broad and deep roots among the masses.

Because of their different conditions the Marxist-Leninists

with whom we met have had to approach the question of party building in a different way in each country. In some countries, a single Marxist-Leninist party already exists. In other countries, like Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and the Dominican Republic, the major Marxist-Leninist organizations and parties are very close to achieving unity into a single party. What is common to their efforts to unite is their struggle to resolve differences in political line in a principled way. In every case where unity is imminent, there were initially sharp major differences between the different Marxist-Leninist parties and groups. But through a process of protracted struggle and joint work, they have been able to resolve almost all of their differences, and are now almost in a position to achieve organizational unity. We think that this is an important lesson for our movement in the U.S. The struggle for the correct political line must be placed at the center of all party building efforts.

The other thing that we learned from these discussions is that principled unity is possible to achieve, and that the conditions for this unity are better than ever because of the experience which the worldwide Marxist-Leninist movement has achieved since the struggle against modern revisionism began. □

China is Vigorously Building Socialism

by Gordon Chang

The League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) has received many letters expressing interest in the recent developments in China. This article will address some of the questions and issues of concern about China today.

China's modernization campaign

China is placing a lot of attention on modernization. Is modernization a new goal in China? Why does China want to modernize? What is the relationship of modernization to socialism?

The improvement of the livelihood of the masses of people in China, which requires the modernization of the economy, is not a goal just recently sought after by the Chinese people. For over a hundred years the modernization of the country has been a most ardent demand. In old China there were many reformers and progressives who worked hard to modernize the country, that is, to bring China's economic, scientific and technological levels up to that of advanced world standards.

But none of these efforts succeeded because they did not overturn the semi-colonial and semi-feudal system that dominated the country. They did not deal with the question of who held state power. They did not overthrow the imperialists, feudalists and reactionaries who kept the Chinese people poor and the country backward. With state power in the hands of the oppressors, the development of the economy was either blocked or used just for the further exploitation of the masses.

Finally in 1949 the Chinese people under the leadership of the Communist Party, the political party of the working class, seized state power and achieved liberation. This qualitatively changed the situation; the Chinese people had stood up and taken their destiny into their own hands.

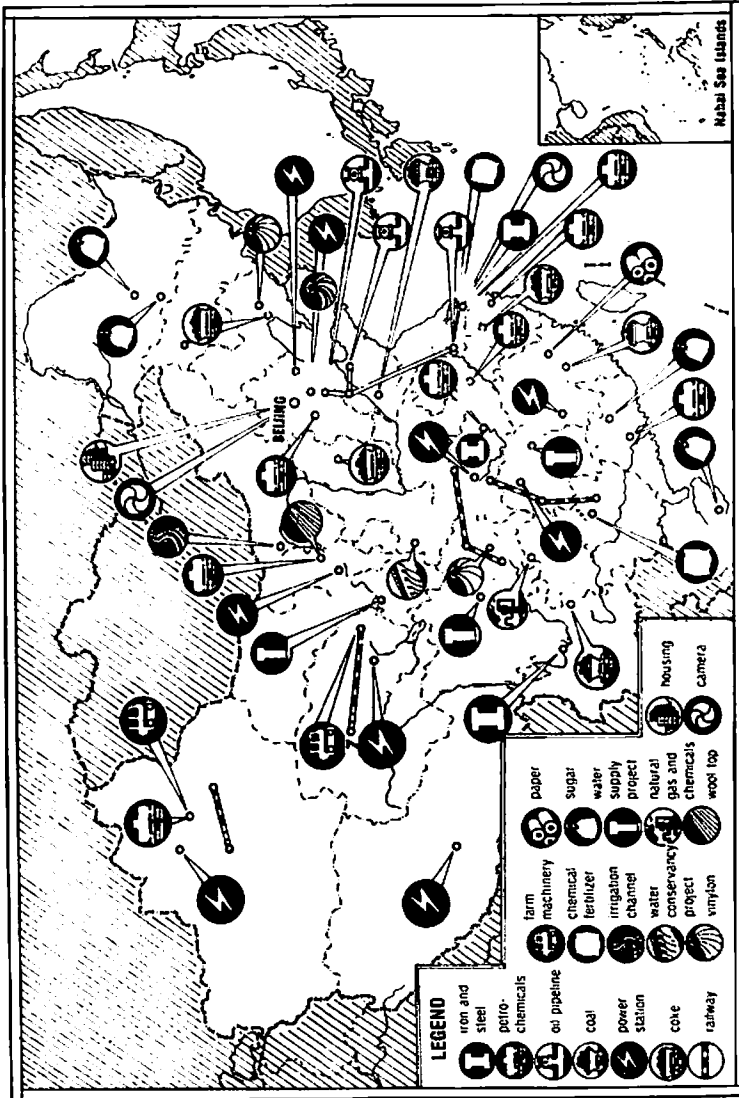
The Chinese people went on to construct socialism under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Revolution enabled the Chinese people to rapidly raise themselves up and modernize. Comrade Mao Zedong made clear the relationship between socialism and the development of the economy when he stated:

Socialist revolution aims at liberating the productive forces. The changeover from individual to socialist, collective ownership in agriculture and handicrafts and from capitalist to socialist ownership in private industry and commerce is bound to bring about a tremendous liberation of the productive forces. Thus the social conditions are being created for a tremendous expansion of industrial and agricultural production.¹

At the same time, only by raising the living standards of the masses and modernizing the country could China develop socialism and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is true that socialism is more advanced than capitalism politically, but this must also be expressed economically. The socialist revolution liberated the productive forces, but then there must be an immense expansion and development of them, something that was impossible to achieve under the relations of production in the old society.

Lenin wrote on this topic right after the victory of the Russian October socialist revolution. He summarized the twofold task of the proletarian revolution. The first task was to overthrow the bourgeoisie and suppress their efforts to return to power. The second task for the proletariat, he explained, was to:

Major projects started in 1978 as part of China's drive to become a powerful, modern socialist country by the year 2000. (Map from Beijing Review)



. . . lead the whole mass of the working and exploited people, as well as all the petty bourgeois strata, onto the road of new economic construction, onto the road to the creation of a new social bond, a new labor discipline, a new organization of labor, which will combine the last word in science and capitalist technology with the mass association of class-conscious workers creating large-scale socialist production.

The second task is more difficult than the first, for it cannot be fulfilled by single acts of heroic fervor; it requires the most prolonged, most persistent and most difficult mass heroism in plain, everyday work. But this task is more essential than the first, because, in the last analysis, the deepest source of strength for victories over the bourgeoisie and the sole guarantee of the durability and permanence of these victories can only be a new higher mode of social production, the substitution of large-scale socialist production for capitalist and petty bourgeois production.²

The future transition to communism must come about on the basis of a much higher level of social production than what currently exists in even the most advanced capitalist countries. Communism means the abolition of classes which can be realized only by transforming the entire population into workers. Communism is impossible without the new social organization and consciousness connected to large-scale industry which socialism must build. These are basic Marxist-Leninist tenets.

China made great strides in this direction during its first decade. Its practice confirmed the superiority of the socialist system. The total value of China's production went from 55 billion yuan in 1950 to over 241 billion by 1959, an increase of over 438% in just nine years. Steel production went from 158,000 tons in 1949 to 18.5 million tons in 1960, an increase of 11,708%. Grain production more than doubled in the same period.

But while China made great progress since its founding, it still remained a very poor and economically underdeveloped country. It is very important to have an accurate understanding of the actual level of production in China.

Its labor productivity is low due to the low level of mechaniza-

tion and industrialization. A Chinese peasant produces only 1/50 that of a U.S. farm worker. A Chinese auto worker produces one car annually while his U.S. counterpart produces 50-60 cars a year. In general, the advanced levels of China's technology are those reached in the western capitalist countries in the 1950's.

China's population is still 80% peasant. Peasant production is mainly small scale manual work. In China today there is relatively little mechanized irrigation, planting, harvesting or processing. Mechanization will not only make the work easier for the peasantry, it will also make their labor more productive and lessen the differences in the income of peasants. It will allow for higher levels of collective ownership with the eventual transformation into socialist state ownership (state farms), thus converting the peasants into agricultural workers. Unless the mass of peasantry can step by step be converted into workers, the victory of socialism in China cannot be assured.

As has been publicized, the Central Committee of the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) recently met and decided to shift the emphasis of the party's work to socialist modernization. This historic shift has long been desired but only recently been possible with the development of favorable domestic and international factors.

Over the past 30 years there were a number of different factors which had prevented this shift. In the 1950's there was the Korean War and the threat of U.S. aggression. Later in the 1950's and 1960's there was the international and domestic battle against modern revisionism. During the past decade there was the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution which concluded just two years ago with the smashing of the "gang of four." But now that a situation of unity and stability has been achieved in China, the CCP has been able to make the change in the emphasis of its work.

It is a great revolutionary challenge for the Chinese people to catch up and surpass the advanced industrial, technological and scientific levels of the western capitalist countries. China is aiming to become a powerful, modern socialist country by the end of the century. This great campaign is in the interests of the Chinese people and the people of the world. In fact, it is a political duty of the Chinese people to build up socialism as rapidly as possible, especially in the context of the growing danger of war in the world. A modernized socialist China will be both an inspiration to the oppressed people of the world and a significant factor in the inter-

national arena.

Therefore it is very important to see that the modernization of the Chinese economy is in no way in contradiction to socialism, but rather modernization itself is a great revolutionary task.

Foreign technology

What is the significance of China importing foreign technology? Does this violate the principle of self-reliance and other socialist concepts?

Self-reliance means that the basic initiative and work of socialist construction remains in the hands of the Chinese people. It means not becoming dependent upon foreign sources. Self-reliance never meant that China should close its doors to the outside world and not learn from others. Comrade Mao Zedong made this clear in his article, "On the Ten Major Relationships," and in other essays. He said that China should "learn from the strong points of all nations and all countries," including in the scientific and technological fields. Science and technology can be used both by the bourgeoisie and proletariat. In these fields China is in fact quite behind the levels which have been attained in the western capitalist countries.

This should not be hard to understand if one looks at history. In 1949 People's China inherited a devastated country with some of the poorest conditions in the world. China was the "weakest link in the imperialist chain," to use Lenin's words. The construction of socialism in China began at a low technological level.

During the 1950's China received some help from the then socialist Soviet Union. But with the rise of revisionism in the Soviet Union, China was cut off from this source. In 1960 the revisionists tore up agreements and refused to help China advance. The imperialists and the revisionists in the Soviet Union had a common goal: to keep China backward to try to prevent the development of socialism. Their hope was capitalist restoration. It was the international reactionaries who prevented China from importing advanced technology.

For a number of years, China had to go it alone since there were no actual possibilities of importing technology from abroad.

But there have been important developments which now permit China to import technology. For one, there is no longer the

obstacle of the "gang of four" who opposed the importation of technology. While the gang used "leftist" words to justify their isolationist policy, they deprived China of advanced scientific and technological knowledge just as the revisionists and imperialists did. The other favorable condition now is the change in the conditions in the western capitalist countries. Many are faced with serious economic problems, the U.S. in particular. Now they want to do business with China in order to ease their economic problems. Just a few years ago these countries had many laws preventing business with China. Today their businessmen are running to Beijing (Peking) to sell their products.

Importing technology is not a replacement for her own efforts, but will supplement them. For example, China is very interested in computer science and she recently purchased three units of one model from an American company: one was for use, another for experimentation and the third was for reserve purposes. IBM and the other computer companies were disappointed because they hoped China would become dependent upon U.S. computers. Rather, it was clear that China's purchases were made so that she could develop her own capabilities *more rapidly!*

The same idea is at the heart of the vast majority of China's foreign purchases these days. Her purchase of complete industrial units such as oil refineries or steel plants will immediately help advance production and also serve as models which China's workers, technicians and scientists can study and improve. These purchases are owned by the people of China themselves and will be used to benefit the development of the entire planned economy. This is the fundamental difference between China's purchase of technology and those countries which have not yet thrown off imperialism and capitalism. In these countries technology is used to strengthen the hands of the exploiters and further the oppression of the masses.

Loans from the capitalists

But what about China's acceptance of capitalist loans and investments? What about the opening up of China to Coca Cola?

Accepting capitalist loans and even investment is not in contradiction to socialism so long as these do not violate the sovereignty of the state and undermine the economy. The Chinese practice in

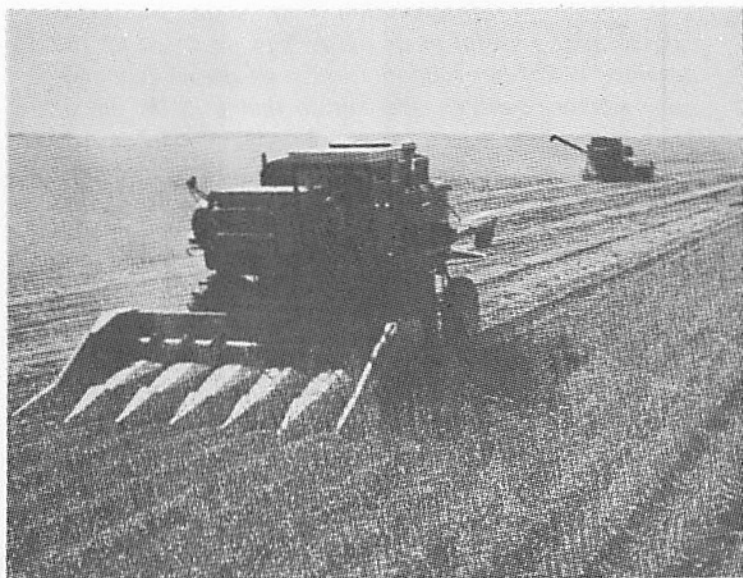


China's New Long March is aimed at making China into a powerful, modern socialist country by the end of the century. (UNITY photo)

this area is fully consistent with these principles, which we'll address below.

First, though, it is worthwhile to review some of the experiences Lenin had with loans and investments from foreign capitalists.

After the defeat of the imperialist intervention into Soviet Russia, Lenin made extensive use of foreign loans and capital.



The selective importation of foreign made equipment, such as these American harvesters, can help speed up China's effort to modernize. (Ta Kung Pao photo)

This introduced advanced production techniques and equipment into the country, quickly increased production, accumulated capital, and developed resources which would have been impossible for the new socialist state to exploit on its own. Some of the concessions to foreign businessmen were major, including leasing out huge tracts of forest land, mines, oil fields and even setting up some factories. Lenin pointed out that the capitalists made very large profits, even "superprofits" off of these investments.

At the time Lenin had to overcome some opposition within his party to these arrangements with the foreign capitalists. Some asked, were not these incompatible with socialism? Lenin felt that while the questions reflected good revolutionary instinct, more than spirit was needed to construct socialism. Yes, the capitalist profited from his investments (if he did not, he would not invest). Yes, he hoped to subvert socialism. But Lenin was confident that the working class could deal with these problems and could immensely benefit itself.

He stated bluntly:

Until the (world) revolution comes about, bourgeois capital will be useful to us. How can we speed up the development of our economy whilst we are an economically weaker country? We can do that with the aid of bourgeois capital

Concessions (to the capitalists) do not mean peace; they too are a kind of warfare, only in another form, one that is to our advantage. Previously war was waged with the aid of tanks, cannon and the like, which hindered our work; the war will now be conducted on the economic front. They may perhaps try to restore the freedom to trade, but they cannot get along without us. Besides, they have to submit to all our laws, and our workers can learn from them; in case of war — and we must always be prepared for war against the bourgeoisie — the property will remain in our hands by virtue of the laws of war. I repeat: concessions are a continuation of war on the economic front, but here we do not destroy our productive forces, but develop them. They will no doubt try to evade our laws and deceive us but . . . we are sure that we shall win.³

Lenin maintained that these economic relations with foreign capitalists had important political significance. It was a great victory for socialism to have the capitalists trade and invest in the Soviet Union. It was a sign of the weakening of world capitalism and, to a certain extent, of their acceptance of socialism. These capitalists knew they were helping “to build socialism;” yet their immediate greed for profits was more decisive.

The socialist state furthermore did its business to strengthen its political position in the world. Lenin used the business dealings to lessen the hostility against the Soviet Union of certain capitalist countries or to promote the contradictions between capitalist countries. These political considerations were decisive in determining with whom and when Lenin would do business.

He wrote a great deal on this subject during the 1920's in such articles as “Report On Concessions,” “The Tax in Kind,” “Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets,” “Report to the Tenth Congress of the RCP(B)” and “Report to the Third Congress of the Communist International.”

China today of course is not in the identical situation as Soviet

Russia under Lenin. For one thing, China has learned from the positive and negative experiences of the Soviet Union. China has accumulated 30 years of experience in building socialism. Its economy is not in the ruined state Russia's was in the early 1920's. China therefore is actually in a stronger position to do business with the capitalists.

At the same time, China's economy in many areas is still far behind that of the advanced capitalist countries. China's economy advanced relatively little over the past 10 years during the Cultural Revolution and in some respects it lost an entire decade of economic work. China estimates the damage of the "gang of four" amounted to some 60 billion yuan. These are not small matters, especially when one considers that over the past 10 years the capitalist countries like Germany and Japan have rapidly developed. Mechanization, automation and technical innovations in the capitalist countries have advanced at a tremendous rate.

In some areas the gap between China and the capitalist countries has therefore not been narrowed, but has actually increased.

The selective use of foreign capitalist loans and even investment can be utilized by China to advance its socialist modernization. But while the capitalist media has given much publicity to these developments, the actual amount of loans and investment is not large at all. The vast majority of China's business dealings with foreign capitalists is in the form of trade.

China tightly regulates foreign investments. China maintains controlling interest. If the investment is in the form of a factory, for example, the agreements between China and the foreign capitalist would clearly state what equipment will be used, the expected quantity and quality of production, working conditions, management, rate of profit, etc. The contracts also include provisions allowing China to "buy back" the entire operation in 10 or 15 years. After the realization of the four modernizations there will no longer be any need to use foreign investment.

So it is important to understand that the Chinese have no illusions about the capitalists. They expect difficulties and struggle, but the proletarian state is strong and the masses' political consciousness has been greatly raised through the Cultural Revolution. The foreign capitalist investments will strengthen socialism because the power and initiative is in the hands of the working class, not the capitalists.

In all of these dealings (trade, loans, investment) China pro-

ceeds not just from economic considerations but from political ones. In fact it is correct to say that China's conduct of her business relations is helping to win the second world countries away from the superpowers and influencing the contradiction between the two superpowers.

The historic China-Japan Treaty and \$20 billion trade agreement between the two is an example of these considerations. Before the trade agreement had been reached, discussions between Japan and China had gone on for a couple of years without much progress. But with the conclusion of the business deal, the treaty talks rapidly progressed and Japan even agreed to an anti-hegemony clause.

Then, during the months following the conclusion of the China-Japan agreements, U.S. capitalists became increasingly worried they would lose the "China business." Suddenly U.S. government policy towards China changed and normalization was realized finally after 30 years.

This series of events was not coincidental, but rather was the result of the correct policies of a socialist state, policies fully consistent with the worldwide strategy of the international proletariat today. In this respect China's business dealings are not simply economic in nature but are important contributions in one form to the international class struggle.

These perspectives also guide China's foreign trade. China has extensive trade relations with the third world and also with the developed capitalist countries. The imports into China from the capitalist countries are mainly capital goods such as industrial equipment or even entire factories, and as we discussed previously, these purchases are part of this stage of China's long-term modernization campaign.

China is also importing some consumer goods, although these constitute just a small fraction of the overseas purchases. One of the most publicized dealings was the one with Coca Cola. The bourgeois media has given the impression that this is an example of China opening up her huge markets to capitalism. Others have tried to link this with China's campaign for democracy, saying that China just wants to give the Chinese people "freedom of choice of soft drinks."

China has no intention of allowing her market to be swamped with goods produced by the capitalist countries. The imported Coca Cola will be sold exclusively in the tourist hotels and stores

for foreigners. Some foreigners have not found China's own beverages to their taste and prefer U.S. soft drinks. By having Coke available, China will be able to increase the revenues received from tourists. These revenues will be very helpful in building socialism. The overall purpose of tourism in China is to help promote wider understanding of socialism as well as to bring more foreign revenue into the country. This will in turn help China pay for her purchases from other countries. Paradoxical as it may seem, Coca Cola too can help build socialism.

In addition to soft drinks, the Coca Cola company is connected with agricultural and food processing equipment. These, too, are involved in the discussions between China and Coke.

Coke is not the first foreign consumer product sold in China, contrary to what the bourgeois media says. The hotels have been selling some foreign made liquor and cigarettes for some time. Thus, the distortions about the Coke business are simply further examples of how "the wish is the father of the fact" especially when it comes to the current developments in China.

"To each according to his work"

Could you explain why China is now paying people according to their work done? What is the importance of labor discipline under socialism? Are not these conditions oppressive to the workers?

These questions concern the very nature of socialism. In the U.S. there have been some naive, semi-anarchist and other incorrect conceptions of socialism. Some of these views have actually been inspired by the "gang of four" when they held influence in China. These incorrect ideas and misconceptions lie at the heart of many of the questions about the policies of China.

So it is necessary to review some of the basic Marxist-Leninist principles of socialism. This will help us understand that the recent measures China has taken are not departing from, but resurrecting many socialist policies and practices.

The working class looks forward to the era of communism when the principle of "from each according to one's ability, to each according to one's need" can be fulfilled. But under socialism this principle cannot yet be realized as the material and mental conditions do not yet permit it.

Socialism converts the means of production into the common

property of society — this ends exploitation. However, “bourgeois right” continues to exist “in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the distribution of products and the allotment of labor among the members of society.”⁴ This is expressed in the principle “from each according to one’s ability, to each according to one’s work,” which governs the distribution of goods mainly through the form of wages.

This principle has a dual purpose. It is a weapon against the bourgeoisie because it means that he who does not work does not eat. Of course this is not directed at those who cannot work due to disability, age or other circumstances. Secondly, it is a policy to encourage the enthusiasm of the working people for socialism.

This principle can only be realized under socialism and is an advance over capitalism. Under capitalism, with the private ownership of the means of production, the working class cannot receive according to its work because it is exploited. The capitalists, on the other hand, do not work. But they receive according to the amount of capital they control. Under socialism with social ownership of the means of production, there is no exploitation and the fruit of all labor goes in one form or another to advance the interests of the working people. This principle means that those who work more and contribute more to socialism receive more. This principle encourages hard working and advanced socialist elements.

Marx and Lenin maintained that “bourgeois right” is unavoidable under socialism and in fact is necessary: “if we are not to indulge in utopianism, we must not think that having overthrown capitalism people will at once learn to work for society *without any standard of right*; and indeed the abolition of capitalism *does not immediately create* the economic premises for *such a change*.”⁵

The “gang of four” spread all sorts of confusion on this issue and led some people away from the basic Marxist principle that “right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.”⁶

In implementing this principle, naturally, there may be difficulties. There may be egalitarianism as advocated by the “gang of four” which leads to anarchy; then also there may be too great a disparity in income. For these reasons, politics must be in command in economic construction. There must be the promotion of communist ideology, politics, and discipline. Moral encourage-

ment should take precedence over material incentives. The greatest productive force is the masses of people themselves. The revolutionizing of their thinking is a fundamental requirement for building socialism as rapidly as possible.

Without the implementation of the principle "to each according to one's work" there would be no distinction for work done or not done; for more difficult, more dangerous or more productive work. This would dampen the masses' enthusiasm for socialism and make attaining communism even more difficult to achieve.

Therefore when we hear today that China is paying according to work, she is acting in accordance with basic principles of socialism and moving firmly along the socialist path.⁷

To better illustrate the importance of adhering to the principle of "to each according to one's work," we can look at the situation in China when the "gang of four" held some power.

The "gang of four" opposed fully implementing the principle "to each according to one's work" and attacked workers who worked hard for socialism as backward.

In those areas where the gang held influence, socialist construction was seriously disrupted. In many factories workers stopped working altogether. These workers, however, continued to receive full pay whether or not they worked. In some areas this went on for several years.

What did this mean? It meant of course that socialist production suffered for the entire country. It meant that the burden on the workers who continued to labor became greater — objectively some workers lived off the labor of those workers and peasants who did work hard for socialism.

In some places the gang justified these practices by saying they were necessary for "political reasons." But this type of "politics" was divorced from social reality and interest in politics actually declined. The two or three years of pay without work contributed to a breakdown of socialist discipline, to fostering individualism and selfishness, to encouraging disrespect for socialism, labor and the collective interest.

The gang's policies encouraged capitalist ideas. It is accurate to say that in some places of China the gang encouraged the development of the *lumpen proletariat* — of elements which prey on the laboring people!

It is in this context that one can understand China's attention to restoring labor discipline. Labor discipline, of course, is

necessary in the development of production, but it has wider significance than this alone. Labor discipline is one of the aspects of communist ideology — its embryonic form is the discipline imposed on the proletariat by capitalist large scale industry. Of course under capitalism this discipline is for the use of the capitalist to make his profits. But socialism does not do away with discipline and organization, rather it models society in the image of the factory: “The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labor and equality of pay. But,” as Lenin pointed out, “this ‘factory’ discipline, which the proletariat, after defeating the capitalists, after overthrowing the exploiters, will extend to the whole of society, is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is but a necessary *step* for the purpose of thoroughly purging society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, *and for further progress.*”⁸

The “further progress” Lenin speaks of is the future communist society where citizens begin to administer themselves and “the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of human intercourse will very soon become a *habit.*” These are the beginnings of the withering away of the state itself and the realization of communism.

But to speak about doing away with discipline or belittling the necessity of discipline in the stage of socialism damages the cause of communism. It assists only the former exploiters, the unreformed or corrupted elements who oppose building socialism.

“The theory of productive forces”

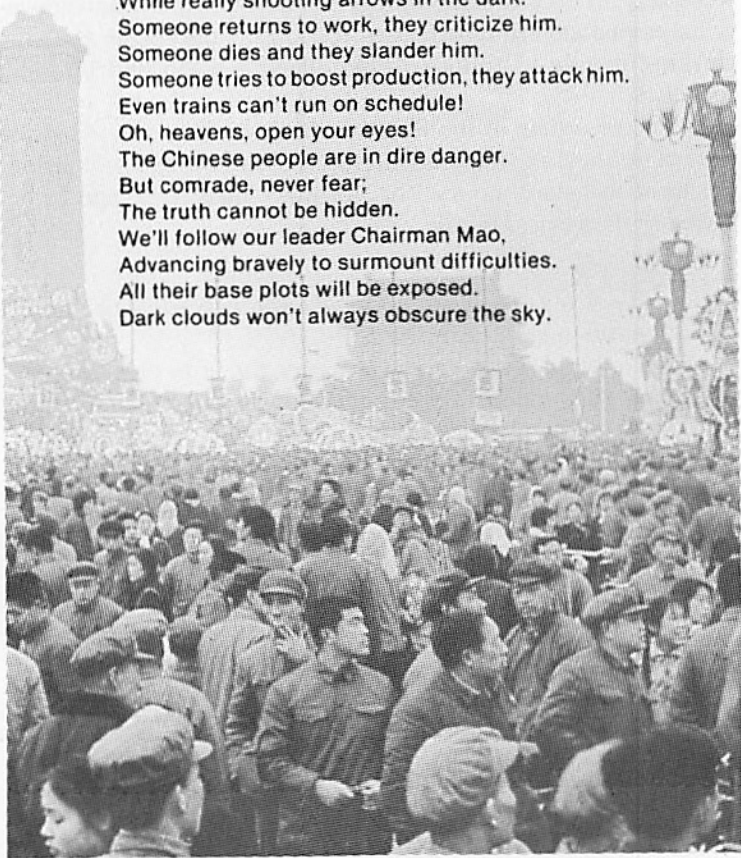
But in modernizing, is China practicing the revisionist “theory of productive forces?” How can we tell if China’s modernization is socialist and not capitalist or revisionist modernization?

The revisionist “theory of productive forces” advocates the development of the economy without consideration of revolution and politics. It is a bourgeois theory which denies putting politics in command.

The “gang of four” distorted the criticism of “the theory of productive forces” by counterposing politics to economics. They accused anyone who talked about the development of the productive forces of being revisionist and promoted anti-materialist thinking.

The Truth Cannot Be Hidden

The premier's ashes aren't cold.
Yet those monsters spew their poisonous flames.
With smiling faces, they try to fool the people,
While really shooting arrows in the dark.
Someone returns to work, they criticize him.
Someone dies and they slander him.
Someone tries to boost production, they attack him.
Even trains can't run on schedule!
Oh, heavens, open your eyes!
The Chinese people are in dire danger.
But comrade, never fear;
The truth cannot be hidden.
We'll follow our leader Chairman Mao,
Advancing bravely to surmount difficulties.
All their base plots will be exposed.
Dark clouds won't always obscure the sky.



Under the "gang of four," people were forbidden to mourn the death of such great leaders as Zhou Enlai. On April 5, 1976, during the Chingming Festival, more than 2,000,000 people ignored the gang's orders, made wreaths, wrote poems and surged like an angry tide into Tian An Men Square. (China Reconstructs photo — poem from Chinese Literature)

China's line today has nothing in common with the "theory of productive forces." China clearly differentiates socialist modernization from capitalist and revisionist modernization.

This is seen in some of her policies in the economic field. Much attention is given to inspiring the working people to take up the task of socialist modernization. China maintains that moral or political awareness must be primary, with material rewards secondary. This political awareness is developed through educational campaigns around Marxism-Leninism, and encouraging the working people to think of the collective good and building socialism.

A recent article in the *People's Daily* directly addressed the issue of political and material incentive. It showed that China does not want to have "money" or "profits" take command as occurred in the Soviet Union:

We stress the role of political awareness while paying attention to material rewards

Today, it is absolutely necessary for us to pay attention to the material interests of the masses and practice the system of material rewards in order to bring into play their enthusiasm for socialism, but in so doing we cannot advocate the omnipotence of bonuses to the neglect of the role of political awareness. Some comrades have said that putting politics in command and spiritual encouragement and all that sort of thing were what Lin Biao (Lin Piao) and the "gang of four" advocated. They say that nothing can be done without spending money. Among a minority of workers there have even emerged such tendencies as "more bonuses for more work, less bonuses for less work, and no bonuses, no work." In the face of this situation veteran workers have responded with: we can't rely only on material rewards. We can't afford to shift back and forth anymore. In effect, we must not swing to the extreme of believing in the unlimited power of paying bonuses while criticizing the omnipotence of political awareness.

Material rewards given for more, better, or outstanding work are kept within limits. The rewards are kept to a small proportion of a worker's wages and are usually given out on the basis of col-



Miners at the Datong coal mine gather around a board listing the results of a technical competition. Contests between teams are a popular way to encourage more and better products. (New China photo)

lective units, such as workshops or sections in the factories. This helps develop more collective consciousness. These policies have been adopted to prevent what happened in the Soviet Union when it restored capitalism. There, bonuses were given out to individuals and often amounted to several times over one's regular income.

China is also paying attention to having management do manual labor so that big barriers do not develop between the workers and administrative personnel. Factory administrators must do one day's work each week on the factory floor. Factory managers also are not lords unto themselves. In China, factory managers are subordinate to the factory's party committee. In this way China hopes to prevent the abuse of management positions.

The overall socialist orientation of China's modernization also is expressed in the overall determination to have modernization fully rely upon the masses of people and serve their interests.

China fully appreciates Mao's lessons that the masses of people are the makers of history.

Concretely, this approach is reflected in the mass campaign today around developing socialist democracy. Vigorous socialist democracy is necessary to arouse the enthusiasm of the masses, but also to ensure that they are the genuine masters of society. For instance, many factories in China have instituted a new policy to allow the election of shop, section, and in some cases, factory administrators. The management of factories is also overseen by workers congresses and the trade unions. With these rights the workers will be able to help determine that modernization goes in a socialist direction.

The big character poster debates conducted in China's streets and on factory walls is another manifestation of the Party's encouragement to the masses to speak out and shape the future of the country. The masses have explicit rights to expose and agitate against those policies or practices they feel are not in keeping with socialism. This has created a great change in the political atmosphere of the country. When the "gang of four" held some influence, the masses of people were intimidated and persecuted for speaking out.

Furthermore, China's modernization will proceed in a correct direction because the leadership of the country is firmly in the hands of the Communist Party of China, a great tested Marxist-Leninist party of the Chinese proletariat. The theory and practice of the party confirms that it is a genuine and not revisionist party. In international affairs, the CCP has closely adhered to the revolutionary line of the theory of the three worlds as developed by Chairman Mao. The CCP has consistently upheld its support for the revolutionary struggles of the people of all countries and maintained its principled stand against revisionist theories such as "peaceful transition to socialism" and "international division of labor," as advocated by the Soviet revisionists. Domestically the CCP is encouraging the wide and comprehensive study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought to raise the revolutionary understanding of the masses.

The CCP upholds in theory and practice the dictatorship of the proletariat to safeguard the socialist system. The party too is calling on the masses to expose and oppose all manifestations of bureaucracy, conceit, arrogance, complacency, arbitrariness and mistreatment of the masses by the cadre of the country. (Cadre are

people holding administrative jobs in the government.)

These are just a few examples of the efforts of the CCP to keep politics in command of the modernization of the country and correct the “gang of four’s” counterposing of abstract “politics” to economics.

True nature of the “gang of four”

But wasn't the “gang of four” just trying to have more equality in China and prevent the development of elites with the restoration of capitalism? Why does China say they were feudal fascists?

It is very important to understand that the gang’s policies were leading to the restoration of capitalism in China. Their policies were weakening socialism and encouraging the development of backward and capitalist ideas. The gang themselves were bourgeois elements.

What makes this hard for some people outside of China to grasp is that the gang built up its reputation supposedly opposing capitalist restoration. But their talk was only a cover for their own attempts to get top power in the Party and country. We can’t look at just what they proclaimed about themselves; we must examine their actual practice and effect on society.

The gang accused many veteran Party leaders of supposedly being capitalist roaders. This was very similar to Trotsky’s attacks on the old Bolsheviks during the time that Lenin was near death. The purpose of these attacks was the same in both cases: to discredit leaders who had made genuine contributions to revolution and replace them with new counter-revolutionary “leaders.”

The lifestyle and behavior of the gang and their followers show their hypocrisy about wanting to restrict privileges and having more equality. The gang themselves lived extravagant lifestyles — this was revealed ironically by Jiang Qing (Chiang Ching) herself to an American author who wrote a biography about her. The gang’s followers also lived such a life. There is a very popular play in China today called *Where Silence Reigns*, which shows how the gang and its followers attacked the veteran communists in an unprincipled way just to gain power, position and comfort.

A key figure in this play is a high official who gained many privileges and material advantages because of his unscrupulous attacks on other communists during the Cultural Revolution. He is shown to be an out and out careerist. The play is very popular in

China because it speaks to how many people in China actually feel about the gang — that all the gang's noise about combating capitalism was nothing more than “thief crying stop thief.”

Contrary to the bourgeois media's presentation of the gang as “austere proletarians who represented the revolutionary left” or even “over enthusiastic, but well intentioned ultraleftists,” the “gang of four” were really self-seekers and capitalist elements who used Marxist words and some “ultraleft” thinking to cover their own personal ambitions.

A good example of the type of reactionaries promoted by the gang is an opportunist called Wen Seng-ho. In China they say he personifies the gang's essence. His career illustrates what is called the new bourgeois elements that appear under socialism, and also what is meant by the gang's feudal fascism.

Before the Cultural Revolution, Wen worked in a Hangchow silk factory. He was not respected much by the other workers, for he was known as a pleasure seeker, paying little attention to Marxism-Leninism and work. He had been criticized for his attitude and behavior during the socialist education movement in the early 1960's.

With the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, Wen suddenly became very active and incited factionalism and disruption at the factory. He carried out Lin Biao and the “gang of four's” line of “overthrowing all” and attacked the veteran cadre. Soon afterwards he began to meet personally with Yao Wenyuan (Yao Wen Yuen) and Wang Hongwen (Wang Hung Wen), two of the “gang of four.” With their backing, Wen rose up rapidly, first becoming a director at this factory and then even a member of the Standing Committee of the Provincial government. He also was admitted into the Party.

The masses of workers at Wen's plant strongly opposed his getting these posts. Ninety-five percent of the workers there, knowing his behavior, openly expressed their opposition to his Party membership. But the gang promoted him over these mass protestations. In 1974, Wang Hongwen got Wen to be a delegate to the 10th Party Congress, even though 550 out of the 581 Party members of the factory signed a letter opposing Wen's delegate status. But the gang disregarded the democratic centralism of the Party and the masses.

With his new power, Wen lorded over the workers. He persecuted the veteran cadre and reorganized the local militia into

his personal shock force which he used to terrorize the workers. Wen retaliated against many of the workers who had previously opposed him — he had some workers beaten up right on the line, while he had others arrested in their homes in the dead of night, imprisoned and beaten for months.

Wen used workers' funds for his own pleasure, squandered money on banquets, appropriated five cars for himself and even converted a workers' sanitorium for his own personal use. He even had people carry him in a sedan chair once when he visited a scenic spot.

The workers persisted against this reactionary — they wrote big character posters, fought against his thugs, sent letters to the Party's Central Committee and even sent delegations to Beijing to report to the top authorities. But because Wen had the backing of the gang, he was protected for a number of years.

Finally in early 1975, Chairman Mao himself went to Hangchow and pointed out that Wen was a bad element. The Party soon sent Vice-Premier Ji Dengkui (Chi Teng-kuei) to straighten out the situation in the province which culminated in Wen's arrest in late 1975.

This struggle was conducted *before* the gang itself fell in late 1976, and is an example of the masses fierce struggle against the gang and its followers.

How can reactionaries like Wen Seng-ho appear under socialism?

They and the "gang of four" can appear because there are still classes and class struggle under socialism. There are international influences, left over practices and habits from the old society, and objective conditions that give rise to these elements. This is why Comrade Mao pointed out that the revolution must continue under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In China one of the objective conditions which gives rise to elements like Wen Seng-ho is the small-scale production predominant in China's countryside. Lenin wrote that "small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale."⁹ While land has been collectivized and socialist collective ownership achieved in China's countryside, the peasant's work is still mainly "small production." Furthermore, feudal production dominated the lives of China's peasants for centuries and gave rise to many feudal

ideas, practices and customs which were inherited by new China. These are not eradicated overnight or even after 30 years of socialism.

The complete elimination of these ideas is hampered by the still rather low level of the development of the productive forces in China's countryside. Agriculture on the whole is not mechanized; rural industry is still rudimentary; commodity exchange prevails and the cultural level of the peasants has advanced, but is still low. As a consequence some feudal hangovers, such as awe of authority, still exist and these can be taken advantage of by reactionaries such as the "gang of four" and Wen Seng-ho, whose conduct was like that of feudal officials of the past.

To overcome this situation, the Communist Party must lead in the development of the peasants' political consciousness through study and discussion. But there must also be a transformation of the material conditions. This is the significance and intention of the efforts to modernize agriculture in China today.

If one rereads Yao Wenyuan's article,¹⁰ supposedly analyzing the social basis of the Lin Biao clique, one sees clearly that Yao practically negates the necessity to transform the material conditions in socialist society as part of the process to eliminate the social basis of capitalist roaders under socialism. Yao mainly advocates "study" and "remolding" one's outlook as the solution, and says nothing about developing the productive forces. Yao's view advocates idealism and ignoring of the objective conditions. His view also became a "theoretical" rationale to attack those who did pay attention to production. Yao counterposed politics to economics.

*What is the importance of China's democracy campaign?
What about the dictatorship of the proletariat?*

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a necessary part of socialism. Dictatorship must be exercised over reactionary elements like the "gang of four" or other enemies of the working class. While the working class exercises dictatorship over its enemies, it extends the broadest scope of democracy among the people. This democracy is impossible under capitalism.

Dictatorship and democracy are two interconnected aspects — there must be dictatorship over the exploiters so that there can be democracy for the masses. There must be democracy for the masses in order that they can be the masters of society, build

socialism and eliminate the bourgeoisie. Whenever Marx, Lenin or Mao wrote about the proletarian dictatorship they always discussed the democracy that is enjoyed by the working people under socialism.

The gang destroyed the relationship between the proletarian dictatorship and socialist democracy. They extended dictatorship over broad sectors of the population, not just over the tiny handful of reactionaries. Wen Seng-ho's career is an example of how state power under socialism can be usurped for fascist ends. If the gang and their followers like Wen had succeeded in capturing supreme state power, the proletarian state in China would have been turned into the fascist type rule we see in the Soviet Union.

The gang justified their fascist practices with "theoretical" articles such as "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship Over The Bourgeoisie." This article, written by Zhang Chungiao (Chang Chun-chiao), one of the "gang of four," supposedly applies lessons on the dictatorship of the proletariat to China's situation, but in fact it distorts the teachings of Marx, Lenin and Mao on this topic. Zhang talks generally about dictatorship over this and dictatorship over that, but completely omits any mention of socialist democracy.

The proletarian revolution aims at the complete elimination of the bourgeoisie and all exploiting classes. The dictatorship of the proletariat must be exercised over the bourgeoisie in order to build socialism. It is impermissible, however, to use this as a rationale to oppress and stifle the masses of people and violate socialist democracy. The bourgeoisie cannot be eliminated and communism cannot be attained unless the masses of people under the leadership of the working class are given full play to express themselves, debate, and control administration. This socialist democracy is necessary so that the masses can learn to distinguish right from wrong, between revolutionary and reactionary and raise their political consciousness through practice and testing different ideas.

Socialism must unleash the enthusiasm and creativity of the masses. In the course of this process mistakes inevitably will be made, bourgeois ideas and practices inevitably will appear and other contradictions among the people will develop. These problems cannot be solved by dictatorial means, but only through the democratic method of persuasion, discussion and reasoning. This is the path that must be taken to rally the masses to eradicate the

bourgeois class. To advocate the elimination of the bourgeoisie without such struggle is pure metaphysics. China is implementing Comrade Mao's policy of "let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend."

Therefore Zhang Chungiao's one sided "dictatorship" actually attacked the proletarian dictatorship and democracy and attacked the struggle to defeat the bourgeoisie. In practice it meant the followers of the gang could justify any persecution of the masses under the rationale that "all round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie" was being practiced.

This background is necessary to understand China's current stress on democracy. This campaign has included promotion of wall poster debates, frank examination of past practices, criticism of bureaucracy and arrogance among officials, revitalization of mass organizations such as the women's federation and trade unions, and reorganization of factory management to involve more workers. It also includes reconstructing a socialist legal system in China.

These measures are a part of encouraging people to speak out, to become more active in socialist construction and to establish some institutionalization of socialist democracy to help prevent the persecution of the masses as happened under the "gang of four." The bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries erected a legal system to protect its property and rule. Likewise the proletariat must develop a legal system and other institutions in the superstructure to defend its rule.

These above measures are vitally important to the modernization campaign — modernization is impossible to achieve without a blossoming of socialist democracy, without arousing the interest, support and energy of the working people.

This socialist democracy has nothing in common with the democracy in capitalist countries which is used by the bourgeoisie to deceive the working people. Bourgeois democracy says people have "freedoms" and "rights" but discourages, restricts and prevents the working people from using these rights. The bourgeoisie also promotes liberalism to obliterate the differences between right and wrong — bourgeois liberalism is symbolized by the attitude of "all opinions are equally valid."

China's socialist democracy, in contrast, encourages the working people to speak out and influence the destiny of the country. Socialist democracy is not an end in itself but a means to determine

the truth, strengthen socialism and arouse the masses. This democracy proceeds under the centralized leadership of the Communist Party which practices the mass line — from the masses, to the masses — to develop the correct and advanced ideas of the masses and struggle against incorrect and backward ideas.

Conclusion

What lessons can we summarize from China's struggle against the "gang of four" and its efforts to modernize?

One important lesson is the necessity for communists to practice dialectical and historical materialism and proceed from the objective conditions. The "gang of four" in China and in the international communist movement promoted idealism and metaphysics — they promoted not paying attention to the objective conditions, but only to ideas divorced from concrete conditions and tasks.

In the U.S. some people's understanding of socialism has been influenced by the "gang of four." This is reflected in the belief that under socialism one no longer has to pay any attention to economic laws since it is a planned economy. Some people believe that the objective social conditions no longer play a decisive role in the determination of social consciousness. This article has tried to show why these views are not correct; there are economic laws that must be taken into account in the development of a socialist planned economy and the Marxist lesson that "social being determines social consciousness" is still in effect. Therefore to understand China today, it is necessary to see how far China has come since liberation. But we must also understand how much further it must go in socialist construction and that contradictions still exist under socialism.

As the thinking of the "gang of four" has had some influence in the U.S., communists here should draw lessons on the manifestations of metaphysics and idealism which has plagued parts of the U.S. movement. This has been reflected in part by the use of formulations or catch-phrases instead of concrete analysis of concrete conditions.

Another important lesson is the importance of understanding that classes and class struggle still exist under socialism. Socialism is not pure, not perfect. There are still sharp contradictions, as we have seen with the "gang of four." The construction of socialism

and the transition to communism is a long historical process, during the long course of which there is trial and error, advances and setbacks. This is as true for those making socialism as it is for those trying to win socialism.

Forging socialism, just as making revolution, requires integrating the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought with concrete conditions. There are no ready-made formulas for revolution and the construction of socialism. This is why one can never “export” revolution, nor is there a blueprint for how socialism should proceed in every country. After the seizure of state power the proletariat must advance under the dictatorship of the proletariat, adhere to a socialist orientation and do all that it can to serve the interests of the masses of people of the country and the world. This is what the Chinese people are doing today and why the people of the world should continue to support and draw inspiration from People’s China. □

Footnotes

- 1) Mao Zedong, “Speech at the Supreme State Council,” 1956.
- 2) Lenin, *A Great Beginning*.
- 3) Lenin, “Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Cell Secretaries,” 1920.
- 4) Lenin, *State and Revolution*, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, p. 112.
- 5) *ibid.*, p. 113.
- 6) Marx quoted by Lenin, *ibid.*, p. 112.
- 7) China has written a number of excellent articles that explains these points in more depth, including her attitude towards forms of wages like piece work. These can be found in *Peking Reviews* nos. 31 and 33, 1978.
- 8) Lenin, *State and Revolution*, p. 121.
- 9) Lenin, *Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*.
- 10) Yao Wenyuan, *On the Social Basis of the Anti-Party Lin Piao Clique*, Foreign Languages Press, 1974.

Sum Up of the Postal Workers Contract Struggle

from *UNITY* newspaper

The League believes that communists must root themselves in the factories and workplaces, and that developing our work in the workers movement is of vital importance to the U.S. revolution. At this time in particular, developing a correct political line on labor and trade union work is a crucial task in the struggle to forge a single, vanguard communist party. The League hopes that summations of communist work in the workers movement, such as the postal workers contract struggle of 1978, will contribute to this process, and be educational for Marxist-Leninists and worker activists. This was originally a two-part article published in the February 9 and 23, 1979, issues of *UNITY*.

Much can be learned from the recent postal workers contract struggle that took place from July 21 to September 15, 1978. With increasing struggle among public sector workers during the summer of 1978, the postal workers movement stood out as particularly significant. The 650,000 postal workers represent the second largest group of organized public sector workers. Like all workers in the U.S., postal workers faced the capitalists' "take-away" attacks when their union contract came up for renewal on July 20, 1978.

The federal government answered the workers' demands for the elimination of the no-strike clause by enforcing a federal law prohibiting strikes and firing workers who exercised their right to strike. Demands for decent wages and job security were answered

by eliminating the no-layoff clause and promising even greater layoffs and speedups. The question of safe working conditions and discrimination were left totally unanswered.

Workers responded to these attacks by staging demonstrations, slow downs, sick-ins, and wildcat strikes in two major facilities, the New York Bulk and Foreign Mail Center in Jersey City, New Jersey, and the San Francisco Bulk Mail Center in Richmond, California.

The capitalists went all out to smash resistance to the contract settlement. The capitalists feared the militancy of the postal workers, not only because the postal system is vital to the functioning of the capitalist system, but also because a victory would have had a tidal-wave effect among dissatisfied public workers throughout the country.

The League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L), through I Wor Kuen and the August 29th Movement (M-L), has a five year history of work among postal workers. The LRS was formed in September, 1978, arising from the merger of these two organizations. For ease of reference, we refer to the work of the League as both before and after September.

During last year's contract struggle, League members and supporters participated in the contract struggle in nine cities across the U.S. This included San Francisco, Oakland, Richmond, San Jose and Los Angeles in California; New York City, Chicago, Atlanta, and Honolulu. League members and supporters were active in the S.F. Bulk Mail Center wildcat strike in Richmond, California and organized in other postal facilities in San Francisco, New York and Chicago. The League also did broad propaganda and agitation work around the contract in the other cities, with *Getting Together* newspaper and later *UNITY*, and with a series of 13 bulletins. These bulletins put out timely news and guidance on almost a daily basis during the heat of the struggle, on a national level.

Objective conditions in the U.S. Postal Service

The Post Office is vital to the functioning of U.S. monopoly capitalism. The capitalists and the government are largely dependent upon the Postal Service to maintain their national communications network.

Prior to 1971, the Postal Service was under the direct supervi-

sion of Congress and received all its funding directly from the U.S. government. Since its inception in 1972, the Postal Service has always operated with a deficit budget for the federal government.

In the early 1970's, Congress looked desperately to find ways to cut non-military government spending. Then-President Nixon and Congress enacted the Postal Reorganization Act in 1971, to change the Postal Service to a government corporation, run by a presidentially-appointed board of governors that includes private corporate officials. While the stated aims were to "provide better services" and make the Postal Service "more efficient," the actual reasons for the reorganization were to cut costs and make a profit for the government.

Since the reorganization, the Postal Service deficit has been reduced from \$2.6 billion in 1971 to \$488 million in 1977. The only way the capitalists have been able to realize such a savings is by making the working class pay.

On the one hand, there have been four rate hikes since 1971, with ever-increasing inefficiency. On the other hand, the volume of mail has increased by 5 billion pieces a year to an all-time high of 92.2 billion pieces of mail in 1977. At the same time, the overall workforce has been reduced from 728,911 in 1971, to 655,097 in 1977. In addition, the Postal Service began building centralized and highly automated Bulk Mail Centers which represented an additional worsening of working conditions and increased accidents.

What this has meant for postal workers is year-round forced overtime, unprecedented speedups, and a skyrocketing accident rate (17,000 in 1971 up to 43,000 in 1977). The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) also maintains a "casual" work force which it fully exploits but which receives no benefits or job protection.

All postal workers suffered from these worsening conditions, but oppressed nationality workers were hardest hit. Since the early 1920's, Black workers, mainly in the larger cities, have been employed by the Postal Service, which is generally recognized as the lowest rung on the federal job ladder. But while Blacks constitute nearly 20% of the postal workforce, they are generally restricted to the lowest-paying and most back-breaking jobs — such as mail-handlers — and make up a large percentage of the casual workforce in many areas. Over one-third of the workers who lost their jobs through job eliminations since 1971 were Black.

The organization of postal workers presented several obstacles to waging an effective struggle against the capitalists' attacks.

First, the Postal Service is an open shop. While the majority of postal workers are unionized, there are at least 50,000 who are not union members.

Furthermore, the postal workers are divided into craft unions: the Mailhandlers Union (which is a part of the Laborer's Union); the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), which includes most clerks and sorters; the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC); and the Rural Letter Carriers Union. With the 1971 reorganization, the Postal Service arbitrarily recognized these four as the sole bargaining units for all postal workers. The USPS consciously excluded the National Alliance of Federal and Postal Employees, a predominantly Black union of 100,000 members — with 40,000 in the USPS — which formed in 1913 because the Railway Mail Association–A.F.L. excluded Blacks from its membership.

The division of the workers into different craft unions, and the postal service capitalists' refusal to grant recognition to the National Alliance, has posed a great obstacle to uniting all postal workers in a common fight against the USPS.

Lastly, the leadership of the postal workers unions are notorious sell-outs. Emmett Andrews of the APWU, Joe Vacca of the NALC, and Lonnie Johnson of the Mailhandlers, weren't going to lift a finger for the workers' contract demands.

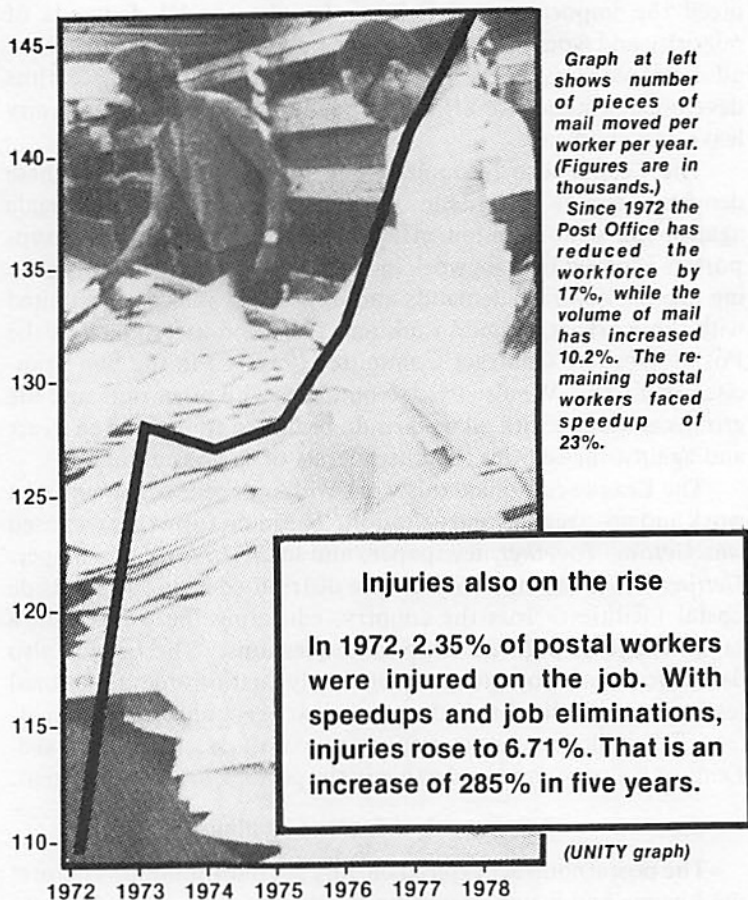
Fight for workers' immediate and long-range interests

The League upholds the importance of participating in and leading the daily struggle of the working class to improve its working conditions and wages. At the same time, the League believes in involving workers in all kinds of other activities, such as the battle against the Bakke decision.

The League participates in the workers' daily struggles in order to win concrete improvements for the workers; and through these experiences in battle with the capitalists, the League aims to build up the fighting strength and organization of the working class, win the workers to see the need for socialist revolution as the only way to eliminate their exploitation and oppression, and build the leadership of Marxist-Leninists in the workers movement.

Concretely in the postal struggle, this meant developing a fighting program and plan of action for the contract struggle; building the rank and file movement through such means as developing workers caucuses and committees; and doing inde-

Job overloading on the rise



pendent Marxist-Leninist propaganda and agitation work.

Based on its understanding of the objective conditions facing postal workers, and in consultation with the masses, the League developed a series of concrete demands for the contract. The League supported the demand for a wage increase which could keep up with inflation. With 10% inflation Carter was trying to force postal workers and federal employees to accept a 5.5% wage increase ceiling. This was a prelude to his current inflation plan. The League also spoke to demands such as strengthening the no-layoff clause; eliminating the sub and casual categories; and

eliminating the no-strike clause. In addition, the League recognized the importance of fighting for the special demands of minority and women workers, as the only way to unite workers of all nationalities, both men and women. The League thus developed demands for affirmative action, and for paid maternity leave and child care.

The League also recognized that in order to fight for these demands, a rank and file movement had to be built to struggle against the sell-out union officials. League members and supporters engaged in mass work in various postal facilities, organizing around contract demands and day-to-day issues. We united with the workers to build rank and file committees, such as the Postal Workers Contract Committee (PWCC) in the San Francisco Bay Area. We also tried to build ties with other rank and file groups and unite with all who could be united for a good contract and against the sell-out top bureaucrats of the postal unions.

The League combined this work with independent communist work and propaganda and agitation. The main form that was used was *Getting Together* newspaper, and later, *UNITY* newspaper. *Getting Together* and *UNITY* were distributed inside and outside postal facilities across the country, educating the workers in a broad range of political issues and questions. The League also developed a network to put out timely, nationwide agitational leaflets specifically directed at postal workers and contract matters. The bulletins were an important part of developing Marxist-Leninist influence and leadership in the postal workers movement.

Assessment of forces and plans

The postal contract expired on July 20, but for months before, the League had begun preparing for the struggle. In addition to analyzing the objective conditions and formulating our main demands, the League made a concrete assessment of the different forces involved in the contract struggle.

The League recognized that the postal workers did have a tradition of militancy and taking things into their own hands, as demonstrated by the successful national wildcat of March 1970.

Through applying the mass line, we analyzed that while postal workers were willing to fight, the actual strength and organization of the rank and file was weak. Many had not actually experienced the struggles in the early developments of their unions and lacked strike experience.

As for the union leadership, there was nothing in the past eight years that would indicate anything else but that the top bureaucrats would continue to let the USPS give postal workers the shaft. Previously they had negotiated the current contract which included the no-strike clause; the loss of 60,000 jobs; and continuing speedups and safety problems. The bureaucrats' line for the 1978 contract was to blackmail the rank and file into giving up most of their demands and settling for a meager wage increase, or else face the loss of the no-layoff clause. In addition, the top bureaucrats kept the workers completely in the dark about the negotiations.

Many workers were understandably cynical about the union's ability and desire to fight for a decent contract. And while there was growing dissatisfaction with the top bureaucracy among many local union officials, there was not a unified movement. In addition, from what we saw, there were very few rank and file organizations across the country that could serve as an active opposition and unite all who could be united against the bureaucrats. The PWCC in the Bay Area and the Good Contract Committee in New York were two of the largest mass organized groups in the Post Office, but their influence was limited and regional.

The League saw that it had the responsibility to give the broadest possible leadership and based its plans on the basis of the conditions and assessment of forces. We recognized that Marxist-Leninists overall were in no position to call and lead a nationwide movement or strike of postal workers. But we did want to help lead the struggle for a decent contract and build the rank and file movement as much as possible, and as broadly as possible, towards an organized nationwide movement.

Our basic approach in the months preceding the contract expiration was to unite workers around our contract demands, and to organize the workers to demand that the bureaucrats of the unions open up negotiations to the rank and file, make strike preparations, and sanction a strike if no agreement was reached by the expiration date.

We anticipated four possibilities of how the contract struggle could unfold, and made appropriate plans for each.

In the unlikely event that the national union leaderships called a national strike, we would try to lead the struggle. We would organize strike committees, strike funds, strikers newsletters and communist support, to build a militant strike with the maximum participation of the work force. We would oppose the most-likely

early capitulation by the bureaucrats, but would assess whether or not we would push for the workers to stay out without union sanction based on the actual level of organization and sentiments of the workers. We analyzed that it would be unlikely that the majority of workers would be willing to strike without union protection.

We also figured that if a contract was settled by the July 20 deadline, it would probably be a sell-out. We would organize to reject the contract and press for an end to the mail-ballot system and demand rank and file participation in all ballot-counting.

If there was no agreement reached and no strike called, we would press “no contract, no work” and continue to push for strike preparations and demand that the unions call a strike. We were also prepared to actively oppose any moves towards binding arbitration, which would take all the initiative out of the workers’ and their unions’ hands. We would continue to press for “no contract, no work.” We also understood that the workers in the Postal Service have not had the experience of government arbitration and that we would have to do a lot of education around this question.

Lastly, we prepared for the eventuality of spontaneous wildcat strikes. After much discussion with the masses in various facilities, we came to the conclusion that the overall level of rank and file organization and unity was too low to carry out a wildcat that was not sanctioned at least by local union officials. To call a wildcat without local sanction at that time would have been premature and would have resulted in mass firings, destroying the ability to develop a rank and file movement in the immediate future. It was our own opinion that the workers were not at a place where they could effectively win back the jobs of workers fired for striking.

We did not think that wildcats were the best tactic at that time. But if large numbers of workers walked out in the facilities where we were working, we would still be responsible to help organize and lead the struggle as best we could and to build support for it. We would not scab. At the same time, we also decided that we would oppose any irresponsible actions by splinter groups who would hope to “spark” a nationwide strike by recklessly misleading small numbers of workers into a hopeless wildcat. This was the consistent practice of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and various Trotskyite formations that we had already seen ruin many a struggle.

In all of our contingency plans, we prepared ourselves to go all out to help lead the workers, build up their rank and file organization, expand the distribution of *Getting Together* and later *UNITY*, and issue timely agitational leaflets on a national basis.

Preparation for the contract struggle

The contract for the 650,000 workers in the United States Postal Service (USPS) expired on July 20, 1978. For months beforehand, the League began its work to organize for the contract.

The League wanted to organize and help lead the workers to win a decent contract, and through this process, build the strength and organization of the rank and file, educate the workers to the need for socialist revolution, and build the leadership of Marxist-Leninists in the workers' movement. We recognized that overall, Marxist-Leninists were still developing their work and ties among the workers, and were in no position to actually lead a national strike or struggle. But we wanted to give the broadest possible leadership we could under the circumstances.

In the months preceding the contract expiration, League members and supporters began to unite workers around a series of demands for the new contract. These included demands to improve the wages and working conditions of the workers; strengthen the no-layoff clause, eliminate the sub and casual categories and the no-strike clause. In addition, we raised special demands for minority and women workers concerning affirmative action, paid maternity leave and childcare.

In building the struggle for these demands, we connected them to the day-to-day shop floor struggles of the workers. We also strived to strengthen the organization of the rank and file in order to wage a more effective struggle against the USPS and the top union bureaucrats who, on their own, were sure to sell out the workers.

League members and supporters called meetings with workers in facilities in Chicago, New York, San Francisco and Richmond, California. We united with other workers to form a rank and file caucus in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Postal Workers Contract Committee (PWCC), which united rank and file workers from facilities throughout the area and from 3 different craft unions. The PWCC called mass meetings, held fund raisers and a family picnic for the workers, and put out a newsletter — all

towards organizing broad numbers of workers into the contract struggle.

Along with the PWCC, and in other areas including New York City and Chicago, we helped to mobilize workers for local union meetings to voice our contract demands and to press the unions to open negotiations and make strike preparations; and we pushed for the position "no contract, no work."

As the contract deadline neared, mass activity intensified. The growing sentiment of the workers for a decent contract pushed local union officials to call demonstrations in front of USPS facilities in major cities across the country, and in Washington, D.C., Marxist-Leninists and mass caucuses like the PWCC and the Good Contract Committee in New York, were active in pushing for these demonstrations and mobilizing for them. In San Francisco, the PWCC also called additional demonstrations to promote the rank and file's demands.

The settlement and the League's general tasks

On July 20, the contract expired. The bureaucrats and the USPS announced they had reached a settlement. The proposed contract was an insult to the workers. It provided a measly 2% wage increase the first year, 3% the second year and 5% the third. It put a ceiling on the cost of living allowance. The no-layoff clause was left intact, but the USPS was still free to cut jobs through a dozen other means — bid abolishments, office closings, forced retirements, and so on. The workers' demands for an end to the casual system, for affirmative action and women's demands, were all ignored. And of course, the no-strike clause continued to be in the contract.

The response from the workers was overwhelmingly against the settlement. Three hundred workers at the New York Bulk and Foreign Mail Center (NY-BFMC) in Jersey City, New Jersey, demonstrated in front of the facility at 6 a.m. the morning of July 21. Sixteen hundred workers refused to go to work. The NY-BFMC was shut down.

That evening, workers at the San Francisco Bulk Mail Center (SF-BMC) in Richmond, California, voted almost unanimously to strike the next morning, to protest the contract and to show solidarity with the New York strike. Among those voting to strike were several local Mailhandlers and American Postal Workers Union (APWU) union officials.



100,000 UNITY contract bulletins were distributed in nine cities during the contract struggle.

The League set out three main tasks. The first was to participate in and help build the SF-BMC strike. We had previously assessed that wildcat strikes, especially those without local union sanction, would be premature and result in mass firings. However, we had agreed that if large numbers of workers wildcatted spontaneously at the facilities where we worked, we would try to lead the struggle as best we could, and not scab. This was actually how the situation unfolded at the SF-BMC.

In other facilities where we worked in the Bay Area, New York and Chicago, we set ourselves the task of organizing to unite all who could be united to vote down the contract and support the NY-BFMC and SF-BMC wildcats. In all areas, we continued our organizing to push the union bureaucrats to live up to the position "no contract, no work" and call a national strike.

Lastly, we intensified our independent propaganda and agitation work. We set into motion a national apparatus to receive and disseminate information, and put forth the League's demands and views at each turn of the struggle.

The SF-BMC wildcat

Workers at the SF-BMC struck on July 21. For the first five days, there were over 100 workers on the picket lines, which the majority of workers at the facility honored. This almost completely shut the facility down. For almost a week trucks filled with sacks of mail remained in the lot, unable to move.

League members and supporters at the BMC actively participated in and tried to give leadership to the strike. We concentrated on pulling together a strike committee of all the strikers, and held mass meetings where the strikers could collectively discuss and democratically make decisions. The strike committee organized the picketing, did a tremendous amount of publicity and outreach work to the press, and spoke to other postal union locals and other trade unions in the area to get their support. The PWCC, which had members in the strike, also mobilized workers and students to come and support the picket lines, and helped the strikers with outreach work to other unions.

The strikers were militant and determined to oppose the contract settlement, and fought courageously against the combined forces of the USPS, the state and the union bureaucrats which united to smash the strike. Over 85 workers were fired, and the USPS used federal marshals, the courts and the police to attack the picket lines and issue injunctions against picketers.

After about five days, the effectiveness of the strike began to wane. Without union support and with the USPS's heavy reprisals, more workers who had been sympathetic to the strike now felt they had to return to work or face reprisals.

Struggle over when to retreat

During the wildcat, the SF-BMC workers stayed in touch with the New York strike through various contacts. The NY-BFMC strikers had suffered similar heavy reprisals from the USPS, police and courts. After a few days, that wildcat also began to weaken due to the heavy attacks.

At the same time, Moe Biller, the President of the New York-New Jersey APWU, the largest APWU local in the country, started to talk strike. After a couple of days, Biller stated that he opposed the contract and that he would be calling a strike vote by the end of the week. Though Biller had done nothing concretely to

support the NY-BFMC strike, he made a big show of appearing militant.

Many workers in New York and San Francisco looked to Biller and hoped that he would call a strike. If Biller called a strike, the whole struggle would take a turn in the favor of the workers. The SF-BMC strikers wanted to wait for the New York strike vote before they decided to do anything else.

The League believed that Biller was all talk and no action. If Biller wanted to support the wildcat, or if he wanted to strike, why should he wait for five days? Why didn't he do anything to support the strikers who were fired? The League believed that Biller, who knew that Marxist-Leninists were active in the wildcat, was putting the strikers out on a limb so as to isolate them, and in fact, to get rid of them completely.

The League took the position of demanding that Biller call for the strike vote immediately, but also maintained to the striking workers that they should not wait or depend on Biller. We stressed that the workers should develop their own plans.

By the fifth day of the strike, the SF-BMC workers were feeling more isolated, but were still holding out for Biller's strike vote. The League continued to unite with the workers to build the strike, but also began to introduce the idea that staying out indefinitely was not the only path. The firing of all the advanced workers was already a big setback to the prospects for any on-going work inside the plant in the immediate future. We began to raise the idea that there were other means of continuing the struggle, and that it would be wise to make a tactical retreat — especially if some workers could still keep their jobs.

A few days later, a federal court in New Jersey ruled that Biller was not legally authorized to call a strike vote. The man who had all along threatened to defy the law, now backed down. He was off the hook. The SF-BMC strikers began to sum up this lesson. The strike committee decided to withdraw the picketing and focus its attention on struggling for amnesty for all fired workers, and organizing to reject the contract.

The question of when to retreat was the subject of a lot of struggle in the League. The League wanted neither to tail the workers, nor to stand against the workers. We wanted neither to act impetuously and without a long range view of the struggle, nor to capitulate in the immediate struggle.

League members and supporters found that crucial to deter-

mining these tactical decisions was having a correct assessment of the objective conditions and practicing the mass line. We sought to understand the sentiments of the workers in a dialectical way. We consulted fully with the workers, through many discussions and in meetings.

For example, we could not go against the workers' sentiments and denounce them for having illusions about Biller. We patiently pointed out Biller's past history and helped the workers sum up lessons when Biller showed his true colors. We also continued to unite with the workers' honest militant sentiments to "fight to the end," by defending and building the strike. At the same time, we pointed out the unrealistic nature of actually taking the path of staying out indefinitely. This was a difficult task of leadership which proved to be a valuable lesson.

Organizing in other facilities and cities

The two wildcat strikes spoke for the dissatisfied postal workers everywhere. All across the country, postal workers were infuriated by the lousy contract and the lay-back top union bureaucrats. Many local union officials also had these sentiments. Scores of local and regional union leaders opposed the contract that the top bureaucrats — Joe Vacca of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), Emmett Andrews of the APWU, and Lonnie Johnson of the Mailhandlers — had negotiated on behalf of their memberships.

However, despite this widespread dissension among the workers and the lower levels of the unions, there was no unified movement or leadership that was strong enough to effectively challenge the top bureaucrats. The rank and file movement itself was in its early stages of development, and was mostly scattered in different parts of the country. Most of the local officials were not willing to defy the top bureaucrats or the law by striking themselves. While some stated sympathy for the wildcats and supported the demands for amnesty and no reprisals, concretely they did little or nothing to organize around these demands. The rank and file movement was not strong enough to have a decisive impact on these officials.

The League took the attitude that we should try to unite as many forces as possible to oppose the contract and win amnesty, and through this process, strengthen the rank and file, and build a broad united front in opposition to the top bureaucrats. We felt

that crucial to building this united front was the strengthening of the rank and file, through such means as developing rank and file caucuses to give full initiative to the workers in the struggle against the USPS and against the union sell-outs.

Concretely, in addition to participating directly in the SF-BMC strike, the League organized in postal facilities in San Francisco, New York and Chicago. In New York, League supporters as well as other workers and groups called mass meetings to organize for the rejection of the contract, to push Biller to strike and to support the NY-BFMC strikers. Similar work was done in Chicago, in mobilizing workers to go to union meetings with their contract demands. In San Francisco facilities we did this, and also helped build material support for the strike through organizing food and money donations for strikers.

Across the country, one union local after another voted to tell their members to reject the contract, and supported the demand for amnesty for the fired strikers. Many regional level union meetings passed resolutions against the contract and for amnesty, such as the Northeast regional APWU, which represents 100,000 workers.

This sentiment was loudly brought to the national conventions of the NALC and the APWU, held in early August in Chicago and Denver respectively. NALC President, Joe Vacca, who had shamelessly praised the contract, was booed down and a few weeks later was voted out of office. Emmett Andrews, APWU President, could not even open the APWU convention because hundreds of workers demonstrated in the aisles of the convention floor for 1 1/2 hours. PWCC and SF-BMC strikers sent representatives to the APWU convention, to help promote their demands, to reject the contract, and win amnesty.

Both conventions mandated their union leaderships to call for a strike if the contracts were voted down, and if no other agreement could be reached within 15 days.

From August 23 to 25, the mail vote ballots from all the unions came in. The results were a clear rejection: NALC — 78,832 to 56,342; APWU — 94,491 to 78,487; Mailhandlers — 8,441 to 7,749. The USPS refused to negotiate any further. Rather than act according to the wishes of the union memberships, the bureaucrats capitulated and agreed to binding federal arbitration. The final settlement reached on September 15 and forced upon the workers was a significant setback. The already weak no-layoff

clause was all but destroyed, stripping all newly hired workers of any job protection until they could accumulate six years' seniority. The settlement also failed to provide 100% cost of living wage increase and offered wages only \$100 a year more than the original settlement.

Contract bulletins

During the entire two month struggle, the League conducted broad propaganda and agitational work among the postal workers throughout the country. In addition to distributing *Getting Together* and then *UNITY*, inside and outside the postal facilities, the League constructed a national apparatus to issue timely agitational bulletins specifically focused on the contract fight.

The League issued 100,000 copies of 13 bulletins between July and September. During the strike the bulletins came out on almost a daily basis. The bulletins were based on information that workers and League supporters in all parts of the country phoned in. They were compiled at a national center and communicated back to nine cities, where they were printed overnight and distributed.

The bulletins contained the latest, up-to-date news on the national struggle, and presented demands at each stage of the struggle. They started coming out before the contract expired, presenting our demands and encouraging workers to unite and struggle for a decent contract. They kept up with the strike developments and actions taken by workers throughout the country. They put forth demands and tried to give the workers guidance for organizing to reject the contract, to support the strikers, for amnesty, against arbitration, and so on.

Through the news and demands presented in the bulletins, we tried to educate the workers politically about the nature of their struggle against the capitalist class. The bulletins helped heighten the workers' understanding of the conditions in the post office in the context of the overall state of the economy and in particular, with public sector workers; the nature of the trade union bureaucrats who do the work of the bourgeoisie inside the workers movement; the nature of the state; and the importance of uniting all the workers into a militant mass movement to struggle for their just demands.

The workers welcomed the bulletins, as they were the only



December 15, 1978 — New York postal workers and supporters demand amnesty for co-workers fired for participating in the wildcat. (UNITY photo)

source of up-to-date information on the struggle. The USPS and the federal government were worried about the impact of the bulletins, and printed an anti-communist attack against them in the *Federal Times* newspaper.

The ability of the League to issue national bulletins on almost a daily basis, in the heat of a struggle, reflected a significant maturing in building a professional propaganda and agitational apparatus. The bulletins directly aided in the independent Marxist-Leninist work of the League. As a result of the bulletins, the distribution network of *UNITY* expanded in most areas. In addition, a number of workers joined newspaper discussion groups and Marxist-Leninist study circles led by the League.

Conclusion of the struggle

The settlement reached by the arbitrators not only hurt the workers' job security and gave little in the way of wages, but also

greatly weakened the chances of amnesty for the 200 workers who were fired across the country. After the settlement harassment of workers increased.

But defeats are temporary. Through the struggle, the workers learned important lessons in the nature of class warfare. They learned who their friends and enemies are, the need to build a strong rank and file movement and kick out the sell-out bureaucrats. Today, the workers continue to fight the effects of the contract and for amnesty, and more basis has been laid to unite with workers and form caucuses in different cities.

The League learned a lot through this struggle. Among the most valuable lessons were those concerning strike tactics and practicing the mass line. The League and the advanced workers learned the importance of having an objective analysis of the situation and to wage the immediate struggle in the context of our long range goals, and not pit one against the other.

The other significant lesson we learned was the importance of nationwide propaganda and agitation. The impact of the bulletins throughout the country was even greater than we had anticipated. They helped to build the rank and file movement and the influence of Marxist-Leninists nationally beyond the actual facilities where the League was doing work. The experiences of issuing nationwide materials during the struggle was a blow at the conservative view that Marxist-Leninists could only influence and lead the working class through direct work inside the factories. While this work is the cornerstone to building a movement in any industry, Marxist-Leninists must broaden their view and combine in-plant organizing with broad propaganda and agitation. This is essential to expanding and developing revolutionary leadership for the working class movement.

Weaknesses

The work of the League in the contract struggle was not without weaknesses. Most of the League's weaknesses and errors in the struggle reflected our relative inexperience in trying to give leadership to the workers in a nationwide struggle.

The main weakness in our work was the inadequate attention given to building the workers organized strength. We did not do enough to help the workers build up the membership and influence of their mass caucuses; or push to form caucuses in areas where there weren't any. For example, we struggled to develop

the SF-BMC strike committee, but didn't develop concrete plans to consolidate and expand PWCC which would continue to do work beyond the strike.

Another related weakness was that during the beginning weeks of the struggle we didn't grasp deeply enough the importance of concretely laying the basis for a nationwide rank and file movement. We didn't actually push to make ties and link up with various caucuses and workers' groups across the country. Many workers in different cities expressed the need for this. As we understood this better, *Getting Together* helped organize a tour for a PWCC representative and a BMC striker to five different cities in the U.S. in August.

The weaknesses were due to our inexperience and not grasping deeply enough the importance of consolidating the workers' strength organizationally through the course of struggle, on as broad a scale as possible.

In our propaganda and agitation work, we relied mainly on the newspaper and the bulletins. These fulfilled the purposes of getting out both news and analysis on broad questions facing the revolution; as well as having timely agitation around the contract. We had also wanted to come out with more propaganda pieces specifically for the postal workers, taking up issues facing them in more depth. However, we were not able to develop these at the time. This weakness reflected a level of primitiveness that still existed in our propaganda and agitation work. The other weakness in this work was that we did not have enough flexibility in allowing the local areas to adjust the national bulletins to include local concerns.

* * *

At this time, workers in the post office and other industries are increasing their struggles everywhere. It is crucial for Marxist-Leninists to participate in these struggles and to try to lead them in order to deepen communist ties and influence within the working class. The communist movement is still in the process of developing a correct Marxist-Leninist line on labor and trade union work. This line can only be tested and deepened in the course of trying to provide the best and broadest possible leadership to the struggles of workers.

In this context, the League on the whole fulfilled its goals in the postal workers contract struggle. We played an active role in

the workers struggle for a good contract, and strived to give concrete leadership to winning this fight. At the same time, we paid attention to building the workers long range struggle by strengthening their own organization and fighting capacity, and by doing Marxist-Leninist propaganda and agitational work. The work of the League in the 1978 contract struggle laid the basis for continuing work, in fighting for better working conditions and amnesty, and in building a national rank and file movement and Marxist-Leninist leadership in the working class. □

The Soviet Union: Prisonhouse of Nations Once Again

by Jim Woods

“A prisonhouse of nations” — this is how Lenin branded tsarist Russia. Under the tsar the minority nationalities suffered the most barbaric persecution, including outright extermination as well as “Russification,” the imposition of Great Russian culture and language on the minority peoples. In his “Lecture on the 1905 Revolution,” Lenin wrote that “Over one-half, almost three-fifths (to be exact 57%) of the population of Russia is subject to national oppression: they are not even free to use their native language and are forcibly Russified.”¹ “Every step of the tsars” concerning the minority nationalities was marked by “fire, bloodshed and violence.”²

But the great October socialist revolution led by Lenin put an end to the domination of the working people and nationalities in Russia. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the peoples of Russia won complete equality and national liberation. The socialist state annulled all unequal treaties, abolished all national privileges and restrictions, and provided materially for the development of national minorities in the territories of Russia. Minority populations, formerly in decline, began to increase. National languages and culture flourished. The Soviet government opposed all policies of Russification and compulsory assimilation.

The Bolsheviks summarized their policy on the national question as:

- 1) recognition of the right of nations to secession;
- 2) regional autonomy for nations remaining within the given state;
- 3) special legislation guaranteeing freedom of development for national minorities; and
- 4) a single, indivisible proletarian collective, a single party, for the proletarians of all nationalities of the given state.

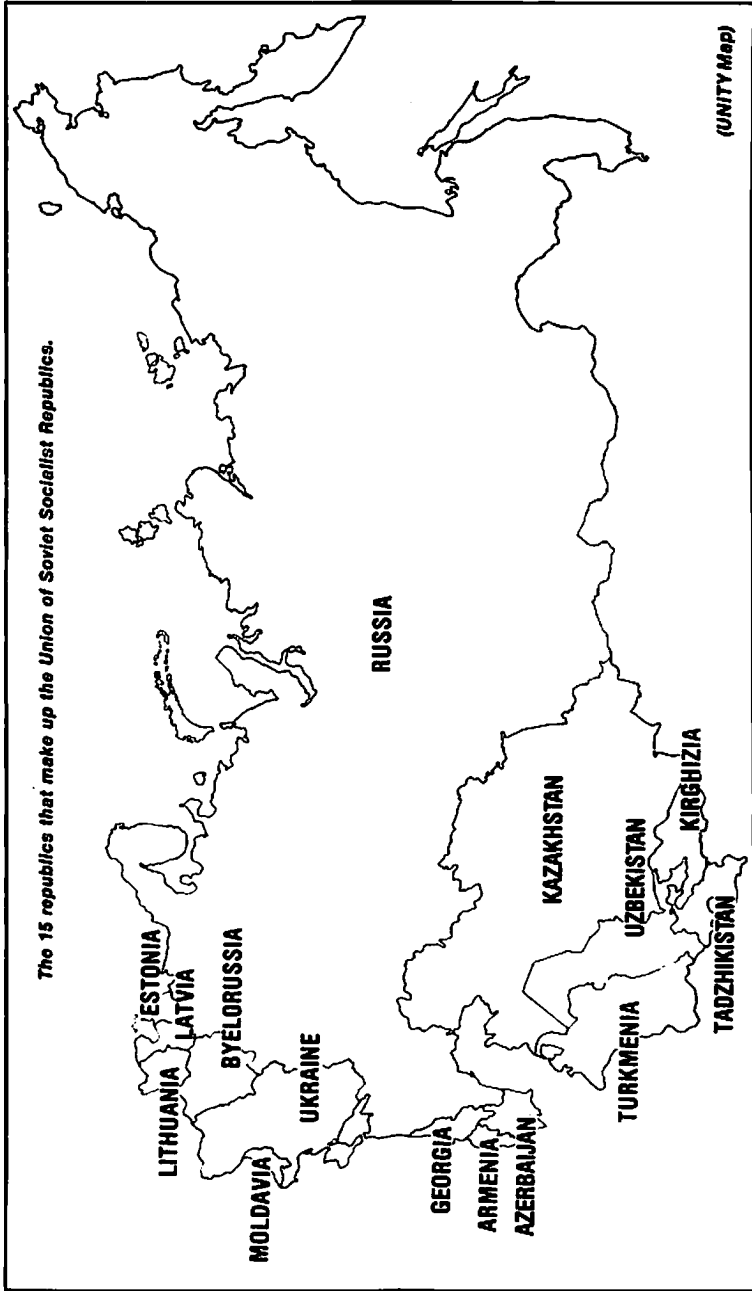
*(Stalin, The Seventh Conference of the
Russian Social Democratic Labor Party)*

Within a decade of the revolution, the most populous nationalities of Russia organized themselves into socialist republics, all of which developed their own customs, languages and institutions — their own national and political lives — within a voluntary federated socialist union, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. All the republics maintained the right to enter into direct relations with foreign states, and at all times the national republics maintained their right to independence, including the right to secede from the Soviet Union if they so desired. The smaller minority nationalities organized other forms of administration to govern their lives, such as regional autonomy.

The U.S.S.R. became composed of close to 200 distinct nationalities, including 15 republics — the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Moldavia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, and Russia proper, the former oppressor nation. Few areas of the world were so rich in national diversity. At the same time, the unity of the Soviet peoples was the direct result of the unprecedented equality of nations and nationalities achieved through the socialist revolution.

Today, however, no one looks to the Soviet Union as an example of national self-determination and equality of peoples. Demonstrations against Russian chauvinism are a common occurrence in the Soviet Republics today. Self-immolations against inequalities and national oppression are multiplying in Lithuania, Estonia, and the Ukraine. Byelorussian students often hold “Russians Go Home” demonstrations, shouting slogans such as “This is not Czechoslovakia.” Crimean Tartars, held captive in Moscow-run “work projects” are campaigning for return to their homeland. Incidents — such as a Russian hitting a Tajik child a

The 15 republics that make up the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.



(UNITY Map)

year ago — touch off protests in the thousands. More and more Moscow has to call on the “124th” and other army divisions to quell resistance.

Protest letters to the government, the formation of underground resistance organizations, the mass expulsion and exodus of minority cadre from the party and government — none of these are isolated events. National contradictions are sharpening in the Soviet Union.

With the complete restoration of capitalism, which took place after the Khrushchev revisionists seized power in the 1950's, Russia has become a prisonhouse of nations once again. And Great Russian chauvinism and oppression has become a focal point of hatred and resistance.

The following article reviews some of the manifestations of national oppression under the “new tsars” of the Soviet Union today. The article draws from a wide variety of contemporary sources including publications from the Soviet Union.

I. Moscow's relentless Russification of non-Russian peoples

History books and museums, films and theaters, schools and periodicals — the entire cultural life of the minority nationalities is being Russified in the Soviet Union today. The national customs and beautiful cultures of the non-Russian peoples are being ground down by Moscow as it tries to force the various nationalities into a monolithic Russian empire based on Russian language and culture, just as in the days of the tsar.

Rewriting history

To justify this process, the revisionists have systematically rewritten the history of the non-Russian peoples from the point of view of tsarism to promote Russification. In Lenin and Stalin's time, the Soviet Union published many books about the glorious history of the various Soviet nationalities — such as the Tajiks, Uzbeks and Central Asian peoples, who waged valorous struggles against tsarism and who developed science and art through their own creative labor and wisdom. In contrast, Soviet schools and books today deliberately efface the creative role which non-Russian nationalities played in history. Soviet books praise non-Russian culture, not for its distinct contributions to humanity, but

for its “receptivity” to Russian domination.

A recent Soviet book, *How the National Question Was Solved in Soviet Central Asia*, lauds the following poem as an example of great Central Asian art:

*Oh youths! The chronicles of yore
Pale before Russia's priceless lore.
May they enrich our sons and daughters,
The fruits of science Russia brought us!*³

Along the same lines, the revisionists have completely rewritten the former Bolshevik national minority encyclopedias and histories. For example, the 1943 socialist edition of the official *History of the Kazakh Soviet Republic* accurately described the “accursed tsarist past” this way:

The conversion of Kazakhstan into a colony signified the end of the independent existence of the Kazakh people and their inclusion in the system of military-feudal exploitation, which was created by the domination of tsarism for all the exploited peoples of the tsarist 'prison of peoples.'

The 1957 edition replaces this condemnation of Russian imperialism with *praise* for tsarism:

*The annexation of Kazakhstan to Russia . . . had a progressive significance for the historic destiny of the Kazakh people (The annexation) delivered the Kazakh people from enslavement by Dzhungarian feudal leaders*⁴

The latest Soviet magazines portray Russian tsarism — which Marx called the hangman of Asian and Indo-European peoples — as the *liberator* of non-Russian nationalities. In nearly every issue, *Soviet Life* devotes an article to the former “benefits” of tsarist expansion. The June 1978 issue of *Soviet Life* claims that “At the beginning of the 19th century Georgia joined the Russian empire, and life became more peaceful for the merry, hospitable and witty Tbilisians.”

The November 1978 issue of *Soviet Life* portrays tsarism as Armenia's emancipator:

Armenia's friendly ties with Russia began to grow

stronger. Peter the Great decreed that Armenian settlers be given every assistance and support, and this same policy was continued under Empress Catherine Their faith and customs were respected Russia's movement eastward . . . brought a certain degree of relief to the Trans-Caucasian peoples, and therefore enjoyed their support Russia's armies which included Armenian volunteer corps . . . liberated all of Eastern Armenia. . . . The Eastern Armenians, as Russia's subjects, were drawn into a more progressive economic and cultural life. They began to enjoy a certain inviolability of person

A peace-bringer, a friend of national minorities, a respecter of national customs, a liberator of Armenia and oppressed peoples, a builder of progressive economic and cultural life — in the entire world, who would paint so pleasant a picture of the old tsars but the “news tsars” bent on rationalizing their own conquest and domination!

Moscow's chauvinist theory of amalgamation

The Soviet Union could never carry out its policy of Russification without a great deal of revisionist propaganda. Moscow bombards the Soviet peoples with a host of outright lies and distortions of Lenin, to give Russification a “Marxist” cover. Moscow claims that all nationalities are equal in the Soviet Union. But at the same time, in order to justify their actual subjugation of the Soviet peoples, they claim that the Soviet peoples are a “new historical community,” in which national distinctions are disappearing through an inevitable process of amalgamation into Russia. Those who encourage the growth of minority national customs and languages are branded as enemies of the “state of the whole people.”

In Moscow's definitive theoretical book, *National Languages in the U.S.S.R.*, printed in 1977, M.I. Isayev promotes this “process of assimilation” to justify Russification.

Individuals or groups from particular nationalities (and sometimes the entire people), that find itself on the territory of another people loses its identity in the area of culture and daily life as the result of extended contact. Thus a change of the mother tongue and change of

*ethnic identity occurs The completion of this process of assimilation is associated with the loss of the mother tongue for that part of the people which assimilates The general law according to which there occurs a gradual and continuous reduction in the number of ethnic communities remains immutable. (emphasis added)*⁵

Speaking of the “social homogeneity of Soviet society,” M.I. Isayev says that the time is coming soon when “there will be no traces of nationalities” — with the exception of Russian. Isayev argues that Russian culture, and especially the Russian language, will inevitably prevail over all others. He writes:

*Languages of greater social significance contribute more to the development of other languages than they themselves receive. Through Russian the Soviet nations become acquainted with events of world significance. A member of a non-Russian nationality who has mastered the Russian literary language will be able to communicate freely with all Russians.*⁶

In essence, Soviet propaganda argues that all languages are equal in the Soviet Union — except Russian, which is superior and will inevitably supplant the lesser tongues.

The Soviet theory of “socialist” amalgamation is the very opposite of Lenin’s teachings on socialism and self-determination. Not only during the period prior to socialist revolution, but after the victory of socialism, Lenin consistently opposed all policies of forced assimilation. Lenin said that “Mankind can arrive at the inevitable integration of nations only through a transition period of complete emancipation of all oppressed nations.” Lenin never said that national differences must disappear, or that national languages must merge into one common language within the borders of a single state. Lenin wrote that “Countries will continue to exist for a very, very long time even after the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on a world scale.”⁷

Suppression of national languages

In accordance with its view that the Russian language is superior, Moscow is ruthless in suppressing the national languages (East Slavic, Farsi, Turkic, Iberian-Caucasian and other language

families) of the Soviet peoples. No republic, no region, no national minority is safe from the imposition of Russian. Not even Mongolia, a separate country many thousands of miles from Moscow, is free from forced Russification. The "popularization" of Russian has become a matter of law in Mongolia. The official *Educational Program of Mongolia* stipulates that Russian must be taught from the fourth to tenth grade in all ordinary schools.⁸ Medical students in Mongolia must learn Russian to pass exams, and the key textbooks are in Russian.

The "loss of the mother tongue" to which the Soviets now refer manifests itself in every republic in one way or another. The official *Soviet National Economic Statistics Yearbook* reports that in Moldavia, the number of newspapers in Moldavian decreased by 50% between 1960 and 1974. Only 33% of the books published in the republic in 1974 were in Moldavian as against 64% in 1950.⁹ Soviet officials claim that more and more books are being published in the national republics. What they do not point out is that the books generally glorify Russia and are primarily in the Russian language.

The current Soviet claim that there is "no official language in the Soviet Union" is a complete lie. Take the Ukraine, a republic of 49 million people, for example. All telephone books, gas and other bills in the cities are in Russian. In Ukrainian stores, one is addressed in Russian, and there is often difficulty getting service if you use the native tongue. Medical affairs are conducted in Russian. Sales slips and price tags are in Russian. Menus are in Russian. Phone operators must answer in Russian. Films and plays are mostly in Russian — all of this in the *non-Russian Republic of the Ukraine*.

During the period of socialism, native languages developed and prevailed in minority schools and institutions in the non-Russian republics. It was even mandatory for Russians who lived in minority areas to learn the minority language. With the restoration of capitalism, however, the Soviet school systems have made Russian compulsory, while national languages are merely "optional." Today Russian is taught as the major language in virtually all primary schools, universities and technical schools.

In many Soviet republics Russian was imposed on the day nurseries and kindergartens in the early 1960's. A Party Secretary, A. Abilov, boasted in July 1964 that "The government of the Republic and the educational authorities have . . . started primary

classes with the instruction conducted in the Russian language in all the rural districts Instruction has been completely changed over to Russian for the children of the Tutul, Tsakhur and Agul national groups.”¹⁰

In response to these chauvinist Soviet policies, a coalition of mothers filed the following complaint with Ukrainian government officials in Kiev on November 4, 1965:

*We, the Ukrainian mothers of pre-school children address this complaint to you on the question of putting a stop to the reactionary language policy of the Ministry of Health as it is practiced in the day nurseries and kindergartens in our locality. We protest and demand that, in kindergartens and similar institutions, the mother tongue should be introduced into pre-school education of our little ones We are against the spoiling and mutilation of the Ukrainian language, against the reactionary language policy of the Ministry of Health According to the teachings of Marx and Lenin, all peoples of the world, even if they are stateless, have a sacred right to the development of their own native cultures.*¹¹

Soviet officials make it harder and harder for national minorities to develop, even to maintain, their own native tongue. No wonder there is a common anecdote among Ukrainians: “To study French, you go to France; to study Japanese, you go to Japan. But to learn Ukrainian, not even the Ukrainians know where to go anymore.”

One bitter citizen put it this way:

I have nothing against Russians as long as they stay home. But a Russian at home and a Russian here are two different people Once he arrives in one or the other non-Russian republics, everything — the schools, the movies, the newspapers — must become Russian because he, a representative of a ‘superior’ culture, has arrived. He not only considers himself superior, but master of our land.

Cinema and periodicals Russified

The Ukrainian film industry has been Russified as well. In the 1920's when the Soviet Union was still a socialist country, there

was an upsurge in the young film-making industry in the Ukraine, especially in Odessa and Kiev. Silent films first used the Ukrainian written language, and later the actors spoke the native Ukrainian. After 1959, Khrushchev's men took over all cultural posts and imposed the Russian language on the non-Russian republics. The number of films in the Ukrainian language began to decrease. Slowly but surely, Russian actors and directors replaced the Ukrainians in Ukrainian films and plays.

On December 1, 1959, the Ukrainian paper, *Radyanska Ukrayina*, protested: "The leading film studio in the Ukraine is without its own actors, without its own national cadres. For leading roles, well-known Moscow movie actors are usually invited." In the same period, Kalashnikov, a Russian film maker, took over the directorship in the famous Kiev studio in the Ukraine.

Anti-Russian criticism appeared for awhile in the local papers (papers which since have been suppressed or taken over by Moscow). In one Ukrainian review in *Kolhospane Selo*, March 1960, a film reviewer wrote: "Why does our studio produce films using, in the main, visiting actors: Balashon, Zhakov, Gusev, Rybnikov (all Russian)? Is it not time for the Odessa studio to train its own film stars?"

The Russification process went on unabated. Ukrainian communists who supported the rights of local artists were kicked out of the Communist Party, branded as "chauvinists" and "narrow nationalists." More and more Ukrainian theaters were forced to put on their performances in the Russian language. In 1962, the Kiev Musical Comedy Theater changed to Russian. By the end of the 1960's, the theaters in Donetsk and Kharkiv changed to Russian.

Moscow also established control over the Ukrainian periodicals. At the newsstands, Ukrainian papers are often unavailable, though Russian papers abound. Russian books flood the Ukrainian market. While there are over 40 million Ukrainians, Ukrainian editions of books are often printed in the mere hundreds.

Russian penetration

To carry out its policy of forced assimilation, Moscow floods the non-Russian areas with Russian administrators and personnel. If we compare the present ratio of Russians and non-Russians to

the ratio in 1926, when the first official census data was recorded, we find that the Russian population has nearly tripled in Estonia, Kirghizia, Uzbekistan, and it has doubled for the Ukraine, Latvia and Turkmenistan.

In most republics, Russians occupy key positions in all spheres of political, economic and cultural life. In particular, the Ukrainian republic (the largest non-Russian republic) has been completely inundated with Russian officials. John Kolasky, a Ukrainian who returned to his homeland in the 1960's, wrote:

*Russians could be found everywhere: in government and party posts and offices, in factories, in stores, in museums . . . Many of the ministers and their deputies were Russians. I compiled a list of officials, a total of seventeen. Quite an array of Russians in the government of a sovereign Ukrainian State!*¹²

Penetration of the Ukraine and other states reaches down to the lowest levels. In the industrial enterprises of the Ukraine, "the directors are invariably Russians. The Kiev city enterprises are also managed by Russians."

One Ukrainian expressed his hatred this way: "They come from all parts of Russia, bringing their arrogance, superiority and contempt for the local Ukrainian population. They come as intruders, as masters, as representatives of a higher culture, bringing with them their language which they impose as the language of the government, the factory, etc."¹³

Migrations

While Russian bureaucrats inundate the non-Russian republics, Moscow also disperses large concentrations of non-Russian nationalities through large work projects. L. I. Brezhnev, head of the Soviet government, reported that 93,000 Ukrainians were sent to work on "virgin land" in Kazakhstan in one project. In 20 years, the Ukrainian population sent into Kazakhstan has doubled from roughly 300,000 to 726,000. The Soviets have also moved large numbers of Moldavians from their homeland. The 1970 Soviet census indicated that 390,000 Moldavians (14.6% of the entire Moldavian people) were moved away from the Moldavian republic and noted that 17% adopted Russian as "their own language."¹⁴

I. Isayev, the Soviet apologist, claims that these "migrations

contribute substantially to the process of convergence among peoples In the U.S.S.R. the migration of the population represents a planned redistribution of the labor force . . . to achieve a more rational distribution of productive forces, and to develop the natural wealth of sparsely settled regions.”¹⁵ Such migrations, however, are used selectively to promote Russian domination of non-Russian peoples.

Population control and disappearing nationalities

According to the Soviet’s own statistics, entire nationalities are disappearing from the Soviet Union. In 1926 the official Soviet census estimated that there were 194 nationalities in the Soviet Union. Now the Soviets say that “there are over 100 nationalities and nations and national groups.” The revisionists have never really explained how scores of independent peoples, bound together by a common language, common history and land, have simply disappeared. The Soviet book, *Theoretical Questions of the Establishment and Development of the Soviet State*, claims that, because of “amalgamation,” some nationalities no longer exist as independent ethnic groups.¹⁶

Since the revisionists took power, the population ratio between Russians and non-Russians has changed drastically. Russians were no more than 43% in the 1920’s. They are nearing 60% of the population today. Official Soviet census figures for 1959 and 1977 record a fall from 126 to 119 in the number of national minority groups. Each new census shows a further decrease in the number of national minority groups.

In the period of socialism, Soviet national minorities *increased* their populations and exercised their right to regional autonomy where they lived in compact communities. In accordance with Lenin’s policies, minorities were encouraged to live in homogeneous communities. Lenin wrote that,

*In order to eliminate all national oppression, it is very important to create autonomous areas, however small, with entirely homogeneous populations, towards which members of the respective nationalities scattered all over the country, or even all over the world, could gravitate, and with which they could enter into relations and free associations of every kind.*¹⁷

The Gypsy population of Russia, a nomadic people of Indian

origin, was virtually extinct prior to the Bolshevik revolution. Under socialism Gypsies doubled their numbers in the 1930's and 1940's. The Armenian population, which was scattered and nearly wiped out by tsarist oppression, increased by more than 45% between 1926 and 1939. The city of Yerevan, a center of Armenian culture, grew from 29,000 inhabitants in 1914 to 150,000 in 1937.¹⁸ These trends are being reversed in the Soviet Union today.

With the full restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, compact minorities have not only lost their right to regional autonomy, they are being driven from their homelands and dispersed into Russian districts, so as to accelerate the process of Russification and cultural genocide.

Soviet authorities deliberately make it difficult and often impossible for non-Russians living away from their homeland to maintain their national identity. In 1960, there were 3,359,083 Ukrainians and 843,985 Byelorussians living in the Russian republic in compact communities. Yet there is not one class in school, nor one radio program or newspaper in either native language where they live, even though the Ukrainians and Byelorussians have persistently demanded cultural facilities in their native tongues.

Throughout 1978 thousands of Soviet Crimean Tartars demanded national equality and, in particular, return to their Crimean homeland. Two petitions were served to the Brezhnev clique. Throughout the 1960's Crimeans launched campaigns for return to the homeland, but the revisionists refused to comply with their wishes, branding them as "bourgeois nationalists."

After their petitions were rejected, a Crimean patriot, Musa Mamut, set fire to himself in public. A leaflet said that Mamut's self-immolation was "an angry protest against the blatant violation of our national rights, and above all the right to live in the Crimea."

Hatred for Russification

Throughout the Soviet Union, there is a daily undercurrent of hatred for Russification, not to speak of open political demonstrations against Moscow. As one visitor of the Ukraine noted — when Russians are present, Ukrainians may talk in Russian, even feign a smile; but when Russians leave, the native peoples return to their native tongue. Unofficial Ukrainian schools are being organized in homes and farmhouses.

Spontaneous anti-Russian outbursts are commonplace. A typical eruption occurred at a concert in Kiev, when the master of ceremonies announced a song in Russian about the Russian Volga river. The audience cried out, "No, sing about the Dniپر," the Ukrainian river. Trying to pacify the audience, the announcer said, "We will sing about both." The crowd became louder, saying, "No, sing about the Dniپر, just the Dniپر!" When the vocalist began her song about the Volga in Russian, she was booed and shouted down.

Today, open mass actions against Russification are taking place, and the Soviet revisionists are unable to quell the growing resistance to national oppression in the Soviet Union.

II. The "new division of labor" and the plunder of Soviet republics

The national oppression by the new tsars is also reflected in the economic policies of the U.S.S.R. In the name of a "new division of labor," the Kremlin has deliberately stunted the overall economic life of the non-Russian peoples in order to extract great profits from them. It has created dependent, lopsided economies in the outlying regions. Taking cotton from Central Asia, coal and metals from the Ukraine, oil from Azerbaijan, and manganese from Georgia, Moscow has converted the non-Russian republics into economic tributaries.

Central Asia, which includes the Uzbek, Kirghiz, Turkmen, and Tajik republics, has become a source of cheap raw materials, dependent on central Russia for manufactured products. Soviet writers call Central Asia, particularly Uzbekistan, the "cotton kingdom," a term first used in tsarist times. Under tsarist rule, Central Asia became a source of cotton and a market for industrial goods. Trade was confined to the exchange of cheap agricultural products for expensive manufactured goods. Large capitalist cotton plantations were established by the end of the 19th century, and the delivery of cotton from Central Asia accounted for more than 50% of all cotton fiber for Russia. Manufacturing was prohibited in Central Asia. The land of cotton and silk — "the great white road," as it was called — did not have a single textile mill.

The new tsars who rule the Soviet Union today have updated the colonial policy of the old tsars. Central Asia has become a



Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the 200 different minority nationalities in the U.S.S.R. won complete equality and national liberation. Above is a picture of Kara-Kalpak, a deputy to the Supreme Soviet from Armenia, and her family.

“cotton kingdom” once again. Cotton output in these four republics accounts for about 90% of the U.S.S.R. total, according to 1975 figures. Collective and state farms have been pushed back into single crop systems, where formerly under socialism they were multi-crop farms. Four-fifths of Tadzhikistan’s irrigated fields are now sown in cotton, while vegetables, melons and fodder are being reduced steadily.

The backwardness of the cotton textile industry in Uzbekistan is one example of the lopsided economies of the non-Russian republics. In Uzbekistan, the manufacturing industry has been deliberately curtailed. While producing up to two-thirds of the raw cotton for the Russian republics, Uzbekistan produces only 3% of the manufactured cotton piece goods for the Soviet Union. Eighty-three percent is made in the Russian areas, where no cotton is grown. Uzbekistan is not allowed to produce both raw cotton and manufactured goods together in significant amounts.

The chairman of the Uzbek council, at the 23rd Congress of the Soviet Party in 1966, wrote: “Uzbekistan has to *import* 150 million meters of cotton cloth and a big quantity of knit wear every year. Our republic is at the bottom of the country’s list in the production of knit wear, stockings and socks, while the per capita output of cloth has dwindled in the past few years.”

Now, 13 years later, the situation has worsened, and the “division of labor” has become more extreme than ever. According to the Soviet’s own statistical year book, *National Economy of the U.S.S.R.*, between 1964 and 1975 Uzbekistan’s share in the output of cotton cloth dropped from 3.7 to 2.9%. Recently, the Minister of Light Industry, M. Kurbanov, registered his complaint in *Socialist Industry* magazine: “Uzbek’s light industry has its own supply of raw materials and fairly rich resources of manpower and can expand its production of consumer goods at a fast rate Why then the republic’s textile workers cannot yet bring a supply-demand balance?” While admitting the backwardness of the textile industry, the local bureaucrat immediately blamed the workers. But the Uzbek workers are not to blame for declining production of cloth. The blame lies with the Kremlin and its “new division of labor,” which keeps non-Russians in a subordinate economic status and denies the possibility of them fully developing such industries. A similar situation exists in the republics of Kazakhstan and Kirghizia where, according to *Pravda*, “only three to four percent of the consumer goods available are locally

produced.”¹⁹

The “new division of labor” helps Moscow to plunder non-Russian peoples

The Soviet clique has invented numerous euphemisms for the plunder of non-Russian peoples. In a major address in 1966, Leonid Brezhnev proclaimed: “A perfect system of the division of labor has come into being among all union republics.” Brezhnev said that the outlying republics should stop pressing for manufactured goods, should follow economic specialization, and avoid “irrational” diversification of agriculture. Seeking to explain why present Soviet policies look similar to the economic policies of tsarism, Soviet apologist Maxim Kim writes: “The all-Union division of labor is connected primarily with the natural features of the individual areas of the U.S.S.R. and the need for rational specialization of production in them.”²⁰ Numerous Soviet periodicals prod the workers and peasants of Uzbekistan to increase their production of raw cotton. “Cotton fabrics once again dominate the fashion world,” writes the December 1978 issue of *Sputnik*, “If the country’s requirements in cotton fabrics are to be satisfied, industry provided with raw materials, . . . ‘white gold’ must increase to 12 million tons. The crop farmers and all working people of Uzbekistan zealously abide by their internationalist duty by steadily increasing production.” The Soviet text, *Soviet Central Asia* explains that “The Republics of Central Asia are able to concentrate primarily on what best suits their conditions.”²¹

These are but updated arguments from tsarism, which also blamed economic restrictions on Central Asia on “natural features” and the climate. While some division of labor is not oppressive, the new tsars have imposed an *extreme* division of labor as a means of subjugating nations. Central Asia is perfectly able to diversify its agriculture and manufacture consumer goods, while also specializing in the production of cotton. But the new tsars’ policy is to keep the non-Russian areas non-industrialized or semi-industrialized.

The extreme division of labor imposed on Central Asia and other areas is part of the Kremlin’s overall oppression of the minority people in consumer goods, housing, culture, education, medical and health services. *The Soviet National Economic Statistics Yearbook of 1973* admitted that the 1973 per capita retail sales of consumer goods in the Uzbek, Azerbaijan, and Tajik

republics — the cotton belt — were less than 60% of those in the Russian Federated Republic.²²

The number of doctors for every 10,000 people in Central Asia is one-third less than in the Russian Federated Republic. Living standards among non-Russian working people are lower, according to the Soviets' own statistics. According to the *Soviet Union and Union Republic Yearbook of 1973*, the average monthly wage of workers and staff in most non-Russian republics is lower — by 16% in Byelorussia, 20% in Georgia, and 21% in Moldavia.²³

Results

In the 1960's, John Kolasky visited his Ukrainian homeland and described some of the economic results of the growing "division of labor."

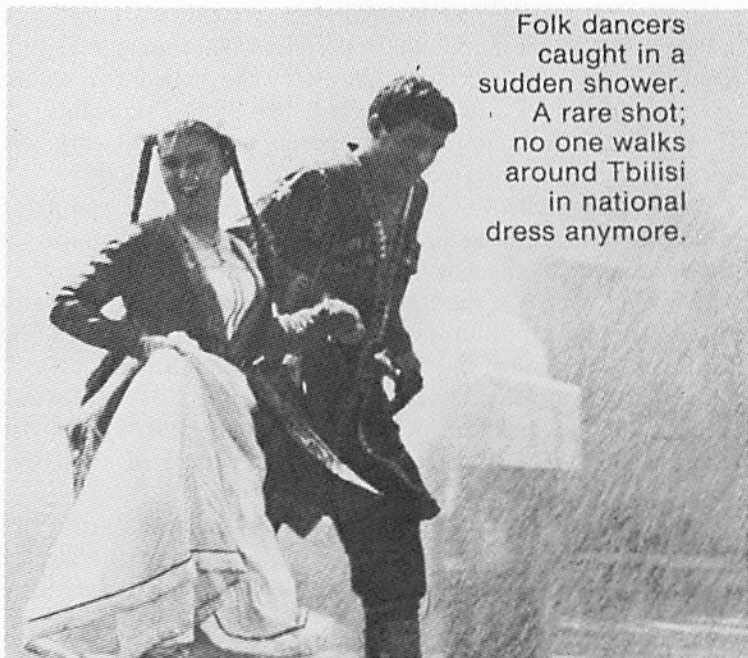
"When I arrived in Kiev, one of the things that seemed most strange was the scarcity of fruit in a country whose southern regions have a warmer climate than the Niagara Peninsula." At that time, Moscow papers reported that fruit and vegetables were rotting on railroad cars in Moscow. One paper said that, "For several days there is no distribution of tons of melons, tons of tomatoes and grapes."²⁴

"Thus agricultural produce for the 'workers of Moscow' was rotting in the capital of the U.S.S.R., while the workers of Kiev, in whose republic much of it was grown, could not purchase fresh fruits and vegetables in their stores."²⁵

With the militarization of the national economy in the 1960's, the Soviet Union had increasing grain shortages, where formerly it was self-sufficient. "Meat was scarce and expensive. Products like butter, eggs, fowl appeared in small quantities . . . obtained at high prices after a great deal of waiting at queues . . . Ukraine, which had long been an exporter of wheat, found itself short of bread. Even with imports of wheat from Canada, there were still bread lines in Kiev."

For a long time, Khrushchev's agrarian policies were the butt of mockery. One anecdote: "Is Khrushchev a great man? Answer: Yes. For 40 years the Western powers tried to undermine the economy of the Soviet Union and failed. He succeeded in only 10."

In 1961, the currency was devalued, and prices rose as a result. Meat prices to consumers increased in June, 1962. Rates for piecework, though, were lowered in the industrial combines. As a



Folk dancers
caught in a
sudden shower.
A rare shot;
no one walks
around Tbilisi
in national
dress anymore.

The new tsars openly brag about the elimination of national customs in this photo and caption from June 1978 Soviet Life. Those who encourage the growth of national minority customs and languages are branded as enemies of the "state of the whole people."

result, protests and work stoppages took place in the Ukraine. Absenteeism also skyrocketed in Ukrainian factories. Odessa port workers staged protests against the export of food supplies out of the Ukraine when shortages were so severe at home.

III. Widespread resistance to national oppression in the U.S.S.R.

No sector of Soviet society today is unaffected by the intensifying class and national contradictions in the U.S.S.R. From Transcaucasia to Central Asia, from the Baltic coast to the shore of the Black Sea, the Soviet peoples are resisting national oppression and the evil consequences of capitalist restoration.

Workers and peasants have engaged in various forms of resistance, including strikes, slowdowns and absenteeism. In 1976, the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Com-

munist Party of Kirghizia lamented: "The waste in working hours in enterprises of local and light industries is enormous, resulting from absenteeism, work stoppages." He called for severe repressive measures against so-called "nationalist remnants."²⁶ The Armenian Communist Party reported that 678,000 workdays were lost in the industrial sector, owing to labor conflicts.

Political prisoners in the jails and concentration camps of Moldavia, Ural and Siberia, have conducted hunger strikes to protest persecution by the new tsars.

Throughout 1978 spontaneous rebellions erupted in many union republics and autonomous regions. More than 13,000 Tajiks rebelled against the Soviet regime when a Russian official hit a Tajik child. The Soviets had to call in the 201st Motorized Rifle Division to quell the riot in Duschambe, capital of the Soviet Asian republic of Tajikistan. Eyewitnesses reported numerous arrests.

In the same period thousands of Abkhazians from the autonomous Abkhazian Soviet Republic took to the streets demanding an end to the robbery of their natural resources by Moscow. Demonstrators also raised demands for the development of their own national culture. In the summer of 1978, Brezhnev was forced to make economic improvements, such as the construction of an Abkhazian university.

In October 1978, thousands of Lithuanians clashed with Soviet police and the Soviet KGB in violent demonstrations against Russian chauvinism. One demonstration occurred during a soccer match between the Russian team from Smolensk and the local team from Vilna, capital of Lithuania. When 15,000 spectators began singing Lithuanian national songs and shouting "Russians out!", Soviet police and KGB agents attempted to make arrests. Crowds took to the streets, rescued their compatriots from police custody, set fire to police cars and tore down pictures of Brezhnev and other social-imperialist propaganda. Soviet officials claimed in the press that the demonstrations were started by a few "drunkards and hooligans." The day after the demonstration, Soviet troops with automatic rifles patrolled the streets of Vilna.

In April 1978, the Georgian republic was shaken by widespread demonstrations against Soviet language policies. The protests were caused by the publication of a new revisionist version of the Georgian constitution. The new version deleted the old provision which stated that Georgian is the official language of the Georgian

republic. The new version said that “all languages would be equal” — meaning that Russian would now replace the Georgian language in courts, schools and other Georgian institutions. In Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, 20,000 people demonstrated in the streets against the new constitution. Soviet authorities were forced to back down and reinstitute the Georgian constitution written in the years of Stalin.

Opposition to Soviet policies in Georgia intensified after 1972, when numerous Georgian cadre were purged from the Communist Party. Since then, bombs have exploded in government buildings in the Georgian capital. Georgians have held rallies demanding the establishment of Georgian printing houses, and portraits of Stalin are being illegally produced and distributed throughout the U.S.S.R. on a mass scale.

The Soviet armed forces, the universally detested KGB, the modern detection and interrogation equipment, the “psychiatric prisons” — none of the repressive organs of the fascist Soviet dictatorship have succeeded in halting the opposition and resistance of the Soviet peoples.

The day inevitably will come when the masses of people of the Soviet Union will have their justice and send the new tsars to meet the tsars of old. □

Footnotes:

- 1) M. Gorky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (International Publishers, New York, 1936).
- 2) Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 15, (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972).
- 3) R. Tuzmuhamedov (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973), p. 147.
- 4) Quoted from the *Australian Communist*, No. 77 (1978), p. 147.

Soviet naval histories are especially adamant in glorifying Russia's violent conquest of the oceans and seas and nations along the water. In an article, “Sixteen Point Turn,” I.S. Isakov, Admiral of the Fleet of the Soviet Union, writes:

“How good that the Russian peasant from the provinces of the Interior, without waiting for the Englishmen to finish speaking, climbed down from his stove-bench and went to conquer the oceans.” Isakov knows, of course, that it was the tsar, not the peasant, who conquered the oceans. (Quoted in *Internationalism or Russification*, Ivan Dzyuba, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968, p. 68.)

- 5) (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977), pp. 36–37.
- 6) M.I. Isayev, *National Languages in the U.S.S.R.*, (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977), p. 290 and p. 300. The Soviets now claim that the Russian language will inevitably spread and prevail throughout the whole world. In the article “The Whole World Studies Russian,” the October 1978 *Soviet Military Review* writes: “There has been a mounting need of knowledge of the Russian language in the developing countries too. The young intellectuals of these countries regard the Russian language as a means of obtaining access to world culture, science and technology. These countries often associated their hopes for national resurgence, social progress, for disinterested economic aid and assistance in the sphere of culture with the Russian language.” In African countries, the article continues, “their personnel have managed to master the fundamentals of technological disciplines largely because they learned the Russian language.”
- 7) Quoted from Wei Chi, *The Soviet Union Under the New Tsars* (Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1978), p. 84.
- 8) *Peking Review*, No. 10, 1976.
- 9) *Peking Review*, No. 22, 1976, p. 21.
- 10) Quoted from Ivan Dzyuba, *Internationalism or Russification* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1968), p. 176.
- 11) Dzyuba, *op. cit.*, p. 160.
- 12) John Kolasky, *Two Years in Soviet Ukraine* (Peter Martin Associates, Toronto, 1972), p. 13.
- 13) Quoted by John Kolasky, *Two Years in Soviet Ukraine, op. cit.*, p. 43.
- 14) Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 22, 1976, p. 21.

- 15) Isayev, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
- 16) Cited in *The Soviet Union Under the New Tsars*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
- 17) Lenin, "Critical Remarks on the National Question," *Collected Works*, Vol. 20 (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972).
- 18) Corliss Lamont, *The Peoples of the Soviet Union* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1944), p. 5.
- 19) Hsinhua, October 23, 1978, p. 48.
- 20) Maxim Kim, *The Soviet People — A New Historical Community* (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974), pp. 171-172.
- 21) *Soviet Central Asia* (Novosti Press, Moscow, 1975), p. 43.
- 22) Cited in *Peking Review*, No. 20, 1975, p. 19.
- 23) *Peking Review*, No. 20, 1975, p. 19.
- 24) John Kolasky, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
- 25) John Kolasky, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
- 26) *Peking Review*, No. 22, 1976, pp. 21-22.

Greetings to the League on its Founding

Seize the Time Collective

**To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)**

Dear Comrades:

Seize the Time Collective would like to extend our warmest greeting to the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist) on its founding. The merger of the August 29th Movement and I Wor Kuen to form the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) is a significant advance in unifying Marxist-Leninists within the United States of America and building a fighting Communist Party U.S.A.

ATM and IWK's merger is also part of the worldwide movement to unite Marxist-Leninists who uphold a dialectical materialist view of the world. With the revolutionary whirlwind of oppressed peoples' movements and wars for national liberation and the transformation of the U.S.S.R. from a socialist country to an imperialist superpower, the international communist movement has faced many complex and serious questions. Time and

time again, only by applying Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought to the concrete conditions have Marxist-Leninists been able to advance oppressed and working peoples' struggles against imperialism and for socialist revolution. During that process, revisionism and opportunism are exposed and defeated, and Marxist-Leninists form the basis for principled unity. Internationally many Marxist-Leninist groups have been systematically working out differences and merging as it becomes clearer and clearer what kind of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice truly serves the interests of the broad masses.

Here in the U.S., in the belly of the beast, this process has been difficult. Yet, "where there is oppression, there is resistance." ATM and IWK both have rich histories of struggle. Both organizations, as does Seize the Time and many other organizations, have their origins in the revolutionary movements of oppressed nationalities within the U.S. during the 60's and took up Marxism-Leninism in the interests of the great majority of the people. IWK and ATM have both been in the vanguard of the struggle within the U.S. to uphold the revolutionary theory of three worlds, expose the "gang of four" and support the Chinese Communist Party and the People's Republic of China in words and deeds.

In the process of integrating Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought with their *concrete practice of revolutionary struggle*, ATM and IWK began to systematically work together and resolve their differences. Seize the Time believes that the method of merger used by the two organizations is exemplary. Seize the Time agrees with the League of Revolutionary Struggle that forging such principled Marxist-Leninist unity is all the more pressing and urgent with the factors for both war and revolution on the rise in the world today.

The members of Seize the Time Collective would like to join in the League's pledge to "make every effort to contribute to the revolution and to the struggle for Marxist-Leninist unity."

Hasta la Victoria Siempre!

A Lute Continua!

Huli!

Seize the Time!

*Comradely,
Seize the Time Collective
October, 1978*

East Wind Collective (Marxist-Leninist)

**To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)**

Dear Comrades:

Proletarian greetings and a hearty congratulations from the East Wind Collective (M-L). The recent merger of the August 29th Movement (ATM) and I Wor Kuen (IWK) and the founding of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) is indeed a significant advance for the U.S. communist movement and a further step towards unifying the entire Marxist-Leninist movement to forge a single, unified, vanguard communist party of the U.S. proletariat.

Since the CPUSA had become revisionist in the 1950's and had attempted to stifle the mass movement by channeling it into reformism, the central task of all genuine communists in the U.S. has been to build the genuine communist party. While party building still remains the central task, the unity achieved between ATM and IWK on all basic points of line and on the evaluation of the histories of the two organizations comes at a most critical time, and we are confident that the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) will contribute greatly to the growing unity of the U.S. Marxist-Leninist forces. With factors for both war and revolution rising on a worldwide scale, the international and domestic developments have made Marxist-Leninist unity an extremely urgent task. ATM and IWK have set an example for all communists to push ahead the struggle for communist unity.

The East Wind Collective (M-L) has maintained fraternal relations with both ATM and IWK for a number of years through the twists and turns of revolutionary struggles. Basing themselves on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, both organizations struggled against various forms of opportunism, developed the political line to apply to the concrete conditions of the U.S., and established ties with significant numbers of working and oppressed masses over a period of nearly a decade. While acknowledging certain errors and weaknesses in the histories of both organizations, and some differences with each organization, we in the East Wind Collective (M-L) have learned a great deal and have

benefited tremendously from ATM and IWK's principled and comradely struggles with us to achieve higher levels of unity.

We believe that the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) has a solid foundation to make contributions to the revolutionary movement and will do all it can to help fulfill the task of unifying the ranks of the Marxist-Leninist movement to forge a single, vanguard party.

**Forge the single, unified Communist Party of the U.S. proletariat!
Long live Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought!**

*Comradely,
East Wind Collective (M-L)
October, 1978*

Bay Area Communist Union

To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)

Dear Comrades:

Today is a very happy day for our movement and the cause of communism in the United States. It is with the greatest of pleasure and the warmest solidarity that we celebrate today the founding of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L); the result of successful merger efforts on the part of two outstanding U.S. Marxist-Leninist organizations, the August 29th Movement (M-L), and I Wor Kuen. The Bay Area Communist Union (BACU) extends its warmest greetings to the new League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L).

The ATM (M-L) and the IWK were each in their own right major components of our new communist movement. Each had an important history and each contributed much to the revitalization of revolutionary Marxism in this country. We in the Bay Area Communist Union (BACU), are fully confident in this new amalgamation. We look forward to the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) to carry on and enhance the marked traditions of respect for principle, dedication to the cause of communism, discipline in mass work and courage in the class struggle, that have

characterized ATM (M-L) and IWK.

Both since and before the founding of BACU, members of BACU, and especially its leaders, have worked with and exchanged views with both ATM and IWK on many occasions. Certainly we have not always seen eye-to-eye and retain to this day some significant differences. However, BACU and the League are well aware that the areas of disagreement between our two organizations are far overshadowed by those areas of agreement. It is for this reason that unity is more and more characterizing our mutual relations. This is so because we have both sided firmly with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought against all of its opponents, distorters and betrayers. With the successful merger of ATM and IWK into the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L), the conditions are more favorable than ever for the further development of relations with BACU and for the general progress of Marxist-Leninist unification.

The need, as well as the urge, for Marxist-Leninist unity is growing stronger every day and is quite profound at this moment. We are referring to genuine Marxist unity, and not abstract and useless concepts of unity based on schematic representations of Marxist party-building formulas. Rather, today the urge is keenly felt for unity among those who truly seek to integrate the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought to the concrete realities and practice of the American class struggle. Today's festivities are a testimony to this truth, as was the recent call by ATM, IWK and the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) for the creation of a Committee to Unite Marxist-Leninists. These, and other less public efforts to forge greater Marxist unity are presently proceeding along promising lines and genuine progress is being made. Along these lines, the future also promises some new and major developments. We, in BACU, are convinced that the current efforts to unite Marxist-Leninists are genuine and must be supported. We are confident that the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L), in the traditions of ATM and IWK will play a leading role in the struggle for communist unification.

The merger of ATM and IWK will be hailed by genuine and clear-sighted Marxists, just as it will be assailed by the opponents of Marxism. It will be understood by those who have properly appraised the needs and responsibilities of our movement, and it will be misunderstood by those who are confused and disoriented. Whether one supports and warmly greets this accomplishment or

whether one shuns it and criticizes it, will be a key indicator of the forthrightness and clearheadedness of all sectors of the movement.

The Bay Area Communist Union (BACU) wishes the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) the best and congratulates you in comradeship and solidarity.

Confident in the future of the League!
Confident in the efforts to unite Marxist-Leninists!
Confident in the victory of our cause!

*With great respect and warm regards,
Bay Area Communist Union
October, 1978*

Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)

To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)

Dear Comrades:

On behalf of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) of the United States, we express our warm congratulations and fraternal greetings on the merger of the August 29th Movement (Marxist-Leninist) and I Wor Kuen, and on the formation of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist).

This event is a welcome step forward on the road to a single, unified communist party in the United States, the goal for which our two organizations have joined efforts in initiating the Committee to Unite Marxist-Leninists.

Both ATM (M-L) and IWK have had a long history of revolutionary struggle and both have made important contributions to the cause of the working class. Both have played a major role in the fight against modern revisionism and in the present-day party-building efforts.

The League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) has declared its firm commitment to continue waging the struggle for socialism and to fight against the U.S. imperialists and their exploitation and oppression of the masses; against the aggression and war prepara-

tions of the two superpowers; and in resolute defense of the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought against revisionism and opportunism in the U.S. In particular, both former organizations have contributed to the defense of the scientific theory of three worlds, and to the defense of socialist China. Our two organizations are already united on many major points of principle and are committed to broadening and deepening our unity in the months ahead.

At this time, when the crisis is sharpening, the war preparations of the two superpowers becoming more rapid, and the struggles of the masses demanding clear and unified revolutionary leadership, the urgency of communist unity is greater than ever. It is at this time, when the revisionists and reactionaries of all stripes have accelerated their attacks on Marxism-Leninism, on the international communist movement, and on socialist China, that all Marxist-Leninists must intensify our efforts to close ranks, and repel and crush these counter-revolutionary attacks. Through this struggle, all Marxist-Leninists are being tempered and becoming more firmly unified.

It is our hope, and our belief, that the day will not be far off, when the Marxist-Leninists of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist) and of the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) will be celebrating together on the unification of our forces into the single, unified vanguard party of the U.S. working class!

**Welcome the formation of the League of
Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)!**

Long live communist unity!

Long live Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought!

Signed,

Central Committee of the

Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist)

October, 1978

La Colectiva

**To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)**

Dear Comrades,

Marxist-Leninists throughout the land have warmly celebrated the successful merger of the two communist organizations, ATM and IWK, and our independent collective would like to join in and also extend our fraternal support for this timely venture.

It is with great foresight that the two Marxist-Leninist organizations joined together in the struggle for socialism at this particular time, for it is a time wrought with deep struggles; the struggle against revisionism and opportunism, the emerging factors for an imperialist war, the upheavals in Kampuchea, the Albania-China split, the struggles waged against the theory of the three worlds, and the deepening economic crisis in the U.S.

We must be better prepared to answer the call of the masses than ever before. We need a Marxist-Leninist party to guide the masses into action and the League of Revolutionary Struggle's new presence is a step forward toward that goal. Again, our warmest greetings.

Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought

*From La Colectiva
a Los Angeles M-L Collective
January, 1979*

New York Collective

**To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)**

Dear Comrades:

The New York Collective sees the merger of IWK and ATM as a step forward for the unity of Marxist-Leninists and party-building in the United States. It constitutes an example for the communist

movement in showing how Marxist-Leninist forces can achieve unity, carrying and advancing at the same time the task confronting communists in the U.S.

ATM and IWK have played a leading role in the revolutionary movement in the U.S. They have played a leading role in the struggles against the attacks and slanders of the Communist Party of China, specifically against the theory of the three worlds. These organizations have been able to expose the opportunist forces, by drawing in theory as well as in practice clear lines of demarcation between the genuine Marxist-Leninist forces and the opportunist ones here in the U.S. In this process they have been able to win over sections of the workers, the national movements, as well as the masses. Also, their leading role in struggles around the postal workers, steel and auto workers, as well as within the national movements and mass movements in general are examples from which the New York Collective has learned a lot.

In the process of achieving unity, these two organizations played a leading role in the anti-Bakke movement through the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition. In this way, they forged Marxist-Leninist ties with the broad masses. This work is still going on in different areas of work, such as workplaces, communities and campuses.

The unity and merger of ATM and IWK comes about precisely when the menace of war is growing, and Marxist-Leninist unity is crucial in order to combat this menace upon the working class and the masses of people.

In this spirit, we welcome the formation of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L).

Long live Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought!
Long live the unity of the working class!
Long live the revolutionary struggle!

*Revolutionary greetings,
New York Collective
October, 1978*

Revolutionary Communist League (M-L-M)

To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)

Dear Comrades:

The August 29th Movement and I Wor Kuen recently united to form the League of Revolutionary Struggle. The Revolutionary Communist League (M-L-M) greets this as an important step towards Marxist-Leninist unity and toward the formation of the new, anti-revisionist communist party.

This action proves that, despite the sectarian divisiveness that has plagued our movement, genuine Marxist-Leninists can unite on a basis of principle. Both of the constituent organizations of the LRS have criticized themselves for characteristic errors in their past work. Surely this new stage of development will provide favorable ground upon which to struggle against these errors and to eliminate them.

Certainly this merger marks the beginning of a new trend towards uniting genuine Marxist-Leninist organizations in the anti-revisionist communist movement and winning the advanced to communism, and in the heat of class struggle building a new communist party for the USA.

Revolutionary Communist League (M-L-M)
March, 1979

Revolutionary Workers Headquarters

To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)

Dear Comrades:

Congratulations to the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist). Your successful effort to unite the August 29th Movement (M-L) and the I Wor Kuen organizations has been

an important step in uniting Marxist-Leninists and marked a turn away from the splits and disunity that have shadowed our movement. Pushed forward by a deepening of both domestic and international crisis, and in particular pushed by a common strategy to oppose the two superpowers and unite with the world's peoples, differences between the two organizations were resolved through struggle. This shows that unity is the growing trend today.

Both organizations originated and were rooted in the mass revolutionary upsurge of the minority nationalities. Both organizations took up the road to Marxism-Leninism as an uphill and tortuous course, succeeding in avoiding dead ends and overcoming wrong turns, all the while showing the basic commitment to the struggles of the people. The LRS is a fine result of this — holding tight to the revolutionary theory while continuing to be at the forefront of many battles.

The formation of the LRS and its subsequent work have been helpful in advancing the understanding of the Revolutionary Workers Headquarters, especially around the task of uniting revolutionaries.

Generally the tasks before us are immense, but the peoples' struggle constantly creates conditions to solve them. The danger of war and the action of our rulers to take the crisis out on the backs of the workers and the oppressed nationalities demand action. By taking Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as our guide and applying it to the concrete conditions of the United States, big advances can be made.

We must pull together to make breakthroughs in uniting with and developing the struggles of the people and in forging a genuine unified communist party. The formation and work of the League are valuable and welcome steps in these tasks.

*Comradely greetings,
Revolutionary Workers Headquarters
May, 1979*

Iranian Students Association in the U.S. (member of C.I.S.)

To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that we, the Iranian Students Association in the U.S. (member of the Confederation of Iranian Students — CIS) have received the news of the merger of I Wor Kuen and the August 29th Movement (M-L) to form the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist). We fully appreciate and understand the importance of unity among the ranks of the people, for we believe that without unity, struggle would be seriously set back and victory impossible. We would like to express our support and solidarity to the newly-formed organization and wish you great success in the revolutionary and anti-imperialist struggles that lie ahead.

There exists a deep friendship and solidarity between the American and Iranian peoples, for they are both facing the oppressive and brutal system of imperialism, and both are struggling for the emancipation of mankind from exploitation and injustice. It is in this context that our movements have developed a close relationship and find themselves struggling against a common enemy.

Today, the struggle of the Iranian people has reached new heights and is dealing severe blows to the shaky, U.S. backed rule of the Shah. We are confident that the Iranian people by relying on their own forces in their struggle against the two superpowers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., and the fascist regime of the Shah, will realize the wish of all our peoples: an independent, democratic, and free Iran.

We hope that we will be able to continue working with you and that we will forge even closer ties in our future struggles.

Long live international solidarity!

Long live the friendship of the American and Iranian peoples!

Unity, struggle, victory!

*Iranian Students Association in the U.S.
Member of the Confederation of Iranian Students
November, 1978*

Indian Peoples' Association of North America

To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)

Dear Comrades:

The Indian Peoples' Association in North America warmly hails the founding of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) and the unification of the organizations IWK and ATM (M-L). Unity among progressive and revolutionary people and organizations is a good thing and a great help to the democratic and revolutionary movements.

Comrades and friends, the struggle of the people and countries of the third world against imperialism, social-imperialism, hegemonism and all forms of reaction is a main feature of the present epoch. The people of India in common with their sisters and brothers in other third world countries are playing a valiant role in this struggle. IPANA strongly supports these just struggles of the third world people to defend their national sovereignty and achieve genuine independence and liberation.

Comrades, your organizations have extended valuable support in the past to third world struggles in general and, in particular, to the struggles of the Indian people against imperialism and domestic repression. We in IPANA are confident that with the establishment of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L), your support of these just struggles will continue and, in fact, intensify.

**Long live the unity of third world and revolutionary
and working class organizations!
Long live the unity of the third world and Indian people!
Long live the unity of democratic, progressive and
revolutionary people of all countries!**

*Signed,
Indian Peoples' Association in North America
November, 1978*

Pan Africanist Congress of Azania

**To the Central Committee of
the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L)**

Dear Comrades:

We received your communication of September 12 and the accompanying press statement on the founding of the League of Revolutionary Struggle with great joy and, on behalf of the Central Committee of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, we send you our warmest revolutionary congratulations.

You yourselves have pointed out that the merger between the August 29th Movement and I Wor Kuen is an important step towards uniting the entire Marxist-Leninist movement. This is a prospect we sincerely look forward to in the Pan Africanist Congress, as true friends of all genuine revolutionaries in your country. We know that your uniting the ATM and IWK came after protracted discussions and close examination of all the factors obstructing unity between Marxist-Leninist forces in the United States. For us, who are in serious need of unity amongst the Azanian national liberation movements and mass organizations, your achievement is at once an important lesson as well as a source of inspiration. We implore you, therefore, to consolidate your unity in the League and forge ahead to build an even broader and greater unity of all the forces that follow the line of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought faithfully. A stronger Marxist-Leninist movement in the U.S. is bound to constitute the most important support for the Azanian people's just cause and increasingly frustrate imperialist attempts to shore up the South African apartheid regime, whilst simultaneously holding in check nefarious machinations by bogus friends "with honey on their lips and daggers in their hearts."

With warmest revolutionary greetings.

*Yours in struggle,
Elizabeth R. Sibeko
Member of the Central Committee of the
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania
November, 1978*

Statement by Seize the Time on Uniting with the League

January, 1979

Seize the Time (STT), a Marxist-Leninist collective, has decided to dissolve and unite with the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L). This decision was reached after a long process of principled struggle, which achieved unity on all major points of political line.

Seize the Time started in 1974. Its members came primarily out of the Black and Chicano national movements, in the Peninsula area of the San Francisco Bay Area. This included the Nairobi Collective, which was composed of Black Marxists and anti-imperialists. The Nairobi Collective was active in mass work around the Jackson State murders, local police brutality, and ran a revolutionary bookstore. It was a leading force in the Bay Area African Liberation Support Committee. Other members of STT came from the Black Panther Party; and some came from Venceremos Organization, a merger between people from Venceremos College which was active in the Chicano movement and a split-off from the Revolutionary Union (RU) with roots in the anti-war and student movements.

Seize the Time issued 15 publications from 1974 to 1977, including the newspaper *Seize the Time*. The newspaper and mass work of its members had both strengths and weaknesses. STT newspaper consistently upheld the importance of the national struggles as a component part of the struggle for socialism. It op-

posed the two superpowers, supported the national liberation struggles of the third world, and opposed revisionism and reformism.

STT members were extensively involved in mass work, including work in the Chicano, Black and Native American national movements; trade union work; cultural work; work among GI's and veterans; and prisoners' struggles.

From the very beginning there was a sharp two line struggle in STT. One incorrect view that was carried over from the Nairobi Collective and Venceremos was an ultra-militarist line. This line promoted terrorism and a "foco" theory of armed struggle — the view that the revolution would be made by guerrilla "strikes" and not by the masses. This line also advocated separate political and military organizations and that the "military front" should lead the national movement. There was sharp struggle to repudiate this line and establish the correct view which placed politics and the party first.

There were also some nationalist errors that were made. For a while, STT had separate white and Third World staffs. The split staff was a mechanical way to "ensure" that oppressed nationality cadre could develop their work. This was a federationist deviation which placed nationality above politics. In part, it was a reaction to the chauvinism in Venceremos which made a show of Third World leadership but actually belittled its oppressed nationality members.

STT waged an important struggle within its ranks against centrism in 1975-6. There was struggle over fundamental questions of the revolution. Some elements in STT persisted in the view that the Soviet Union was not an imperialist superpower. They also believed that the entire U.S. working class was "bought off." They liquidated the Chicano national question and refused to uphold the right of self-determination for the Afro-American nation. They said that neither oppressed nationality workers nor oppressed nationality communists had a significant role to play in the revolution. They held feminist views on the woman question. They belittled the importance of party building and they conciliated with the revisionists. Their views were characteristic of views of the so-called centrist trend in the U.S. They eventually left STT.

The struggle and split deepened STT's understanding of Marxism-Leninism. While centrism tries to pose a "middle

ground" between Marxism and revisionism, the struggle showed that the centrists really side with the revisionists and apologize for Soviet imperialism. The split in STT helped us draw a clear line between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism. It enabled us to correct many of the errors in STT's political line, while reaffirming the correct views it always had. STT moved on, and became a Marxist-Leninist collective in 1976.

STT took up work in support of Gary Tyler, the struggle against the Bakke decision, support for Native American struggles and for the Stearns miners, and in the struggle against the Jarvis-Gann initiative (Proposition 13).

As STT deepened its understanding of Marxism-Leninism and developed its work, it felt more and more the difficulties of being a small organization. STT saw that in order to make the maximum contribution to the revolution, a nationwide scope and overview was needed. Nationwide propaganda and agitation work was needed, and a small collective had many limitations in this area. STT saw the need to play an active role in the struggle to unite all Marxist-Leninists into one party.

STT believed that the correct path forward lay in struggling to achieve unity with a national Marxist-Leninist force. STT carried out principled relations with I Wor Kuen and the August 29th Movement (M-L), and then the League. STT worked jointly with the League in helping to build the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition, in the 1978 San Francisco commemoration for Chairman Mao, and in the May Day program. STT saw in practice the correctness of the League's line and the principled, consistent and down to earth way in which the League carried on its mass work.

Seize the Time believes that the political line of the League is the leading line in the communist movement. Over the years, we have had a chance to see and judge the lines of different organizations. More than any other organization we have seen the League deeply and consistently involved in the mass struggles in a correct way. We have seen them taking up struggles in auto, in the post office, in the Chicano, Asian and Black movements. We have seen the principled way in which the League has tried to unite Marxist-Leninists, and the way in which it connects party building to its work in the mass movement.

We unite with the League's aggressive defense of the theory of three worlds, which proceeds on the basis of trying to win over the many honest forces who have not yet formed a clear opinion on the

international situation. We have been especially impressed by the way that the League has always upheld the national question, which in our opinion is one of the most crucial questions of the revolution. We have seen the concrete way in which the League works to unite the multi-national working class in a consistent struggle against national oppression. This runs like a thread throughout all the work of the League that we have seen.

STT also acknowledges the assistance of the League in helping us to repudiate our incorrect view of the principal contradiction in the U.S. STT had held that the principal contradiction was the national question. After struggle with the League, we came to recognize that the principal contradiction is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and that this in no way lessens the significance of the national movements, nor liquidates their role as strategic allies of the working class.

STT recognizes that the world really is in great disorder. Communist unity is more important than ever. We believe that the unity process between STT and the League provides additional proof that Marxist-Leninists can in a principled way struggle out their differences, treat each other with mutual respect, learn from each other, and unite. Seize the Time is proud to dissolve to unite with the League in taking up the tasks of helping to forge a single, vanguard party and making revolution in the U.S. □

Original graphic from Seize The Time newspaper.



Statement by East Wind on its Unity with the League

April, 1979

The East Wind organization, a Marxist-Leninist collective in Los Angeles, has decided to dissolve and unite with the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L). The League and East Wind have had discussions and worked jointly together for a relatively long time. Through this process our organizations reached unity on all major points of political line in a principled way.

A history of revolutionary struggle

East Wind traces its origins back to the great mass movements that shook the foundations of U.S. imperialism in the 1960's and early 70's. East Wind was formed in 1972 by revolutionaries from the Community Workers Collective, *Gidra* newspaper, the Japanese American Community Services-Asian Involvement (JACS-AI), and other groups active in the Asian national movement. The name East Wind represented the inspiration we drew from socialist China and the teachings of Chairman Mao, who said that in the world today "the East Wind (revolution) is prevailing over the West Wind."

East Wind has a history of broad and extensive mass work. While our work was centered mainly in Los Angeles, it has had a relatively significant impact on the Asian movement and the Marxist-Leninist movement.

Our work ranged from the development of "serve the people" programs, to work with Asian youth, to the fight to get drugs out of the Asian communities, to fighting for the rights of poor, elderly and non-English speaking Asians.

East Wind fought for years in Little Tokyo against the forced destruction and dispersal of the Japanese American community in Los Angeles. This struggle has received support from throughout the U.S.

We also fought for expanded social services in the Asian communities, and against the tendency which promoted reformism while leeching off the struggle for personal benefit.

We also participated in Third World student struggles for ethnic studies and special admissions programs.

For three years, East Wind played an important role in the fight against cutbacks and layoffs and for improved patient services at the Resthaven Community Mental Health Center in Los Angeles. This struggle received wide support from the East L.A. communities. We also gained valuable experience in learning how to carry on communist work in a complex situation involving a number of different class forces as well as opportunist ones, like the Workers Viewpoint Organization.

East Wind helped build support for the historic 11-year struggle of the Japanese people to stop the construction of Narita Airport at Sanrizuka, Japan.

We actively supported the 1973 struggle at Wounded Knee, and fostered material and political support for the Native Americans involved in the occupation.

We also helped build support for the Black liberation struggle by holding a number of educational events and mass actions in support of the Attica uprising, George Jackson, and to commemorate Malcolm X.

All in all, East Wind has a very rich history. We have gained much valuable experience which we believe can be of real benefit to the work of the League and to the U.S. revolution. We have worked in a broad way with workers, students, youth and other sectors of Asian peoples. We have had to fight a variety of opportunists, as well as overcome our own shortcomings. Both our

strengths and weaknesses have to be seen in light of the concrete conditions which faced the communist movement during the past several years.

During the early days of the anti-revisionist movement there was an important two-line struggle on the national question, party building, and other questions. Groups like the Revolutionary Union (now called the Revolutionary Communist Party) said that "nationalism" was the main deviation among Marxist-Leninists on the national question. They were referring especially to communists who had come from the national movements. The RU dismissed all work among oppressed nationalities as narrow and of "secondary importance" unless it focused on "bread and butter" issues which could appeal to "all workers." While we did not participate directly in the polemics with the RU, our correct stand was expressed clearly in our history of mass work, our consistent fight against national oppression and for the unity of all oppressed people in the fight against imperialism. This work stands as a blow to the RU and was a contribution to the development of a correct revolutionary line and building up the influence of Marxism-Leninism among many Asian working people, who saw, in our practice, that communists were the hardest and most consistent fighters against national oppression.

East Wind's errors and shortcomings were, in part, also a reflection of the youth and inexperience of the Marxist-Leninist movement. In the early days, we did not clearly understand the question of party building. We viewed it as a question of each nationality building its own party and then forming a federated organization. In the course of struggle, study and discussion with other Marxist-Leninists, we came to see that this view was incorrect.

One error which we made in our early history was the tendency to overemphasize building actions that "disrupted" the system. This view developed partly as a reaction to reformist errors we had committed in our earlier community and service work. It was also a reaction to reformists who said Asians could end their oppression without greatly disturbing the capitalist system.

This incorrect view dovetailed with another incorrect line which said that youth and lumpen proletariat (which we understood at that time to be street people and ex-cons) would play the leading role in the revolution. Both the youth and the lumpen tended to promote the "disruption" line. After a process of strug-

gle and summing up experience, we rejected these views for one that emphasized the necessity to base our work among the working people, and to patiently build a broad united front of all oppressed sectors, by fighting in the day-to-day struggles of the masses.

In 1972, with the rise in the Asian national struggles and in the midst of sharp struggles within the Asian movement, East Wind developed the "Asian nation" line. This line called for the building of a "nation," or power base, of Asians throughout the U.S. It called for unity based on identity, culture, and through building "alternative institutions" to provide economic, cultural and social services to Asians. This deviation was based on an unscientific view of the development of nations, a weak understanding of the different class forces in the Asian movement, and unclarity on the connection between the national struggle and the class struggle for socialism. At the same time, this position also arose as a reaction to the bitter national oppression we suffered as Asian people in the U.S., and to the chauvinism of groups like the RU. Our position against national oppression and for the equality of nationalities reflected the revolutionary aspirations of the Asian peoples.

By 1975, we recognized the error in the Asian nation line and refuted the incorrect aspects of that position, while upholding the



East Wind helped to organize the Van Troi Anti-Imperialist Youth Brigade in 1972. Many Asian Americans participated in this march to protest imperialist aggression in Southeast Asia. (UNITY photo)

necessity to take up a persistent fight against all forms of national oppression, to organize and educate the people, and to patiently accumulate forces for the revolution.

Party building

In 1975, we began to take up the systematic study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. We also developed regular bilateral relations with other Marxist-Leninist organizations such as I Wor Kuen (IWK) and the August 29th Movement (ATM). In addition, we began to summarize our own experience. On the basis of all this, we were better able to understand the question of party building.

In 1976, East Wind publicly announced our views on party building as the central task of Marxist-Leninists. We also began to develop more fully our views on the international situation, the domestic situation, the labor question, the woman question and other important questions facing the Marxist-Leninist movement.

During this time, Workers Viewpoint Organization (WVO) was going around trying to promote itself as a "super left" organization, heavy on "theory," and light on practice. East Wind realized that WVO was trying to belittle the long experience we had in mass struggle, especially in the national movements, and we struggled against this. However, we were influenced to a certain degree by WVO, who at that time was trying to pressure many groups to lose their bearings and get sucked into accepting the line of WVO.

The influence of WVO did lead to a period in which we began to down-play our mass work. Because of sharp struggle internally, and based on discussions and struggles with ATM, IWK and Seize the Time (STT) collective, East Wind was able to pull itself out of this rut and "start up the machinery" again. We stepped up our work in the Little Tokyo struggle, the anti-Bakke movement, in building support for the Major Safe strike and in a number of other mass struggles.

In this past year, we went through the most serious line struggle of all. A few people within the collective began to promote views which would have led to East Wind remaining a small collective, separated from the party building motion. They raised serious doubts about our history being overall positive, and finally raised doubts and spread pessimism about the correctness of the whole communist movement.

These attacks took place during a time when we were struggling over the need to correct certain weaknesses in East Wind, such as our collective consolidation on various political questions, lack of timely guidance to mass work areas, and others. Initially, the leadership belittled the seriousness of these errors and the need to develop ways to change. But the need for rectification became clearer and was finally acknowledged. But then the leadership was unable to start moving the organization towards rectification until several months later. These weaknesses in the leadership were due in part to the limitations of being a small local collective with such a rich history of struggle to sum up.

But these few people accused the leadership of being opportunist and the rest of the organization of being conciliators. They counterposed rectification and summing up against continuing mass work and struggling for Marxist-Leninist unity. Objectively, this would have led us to withdrawing from practice and discontinuing serious discussion with other Marxist-Leninists until all problems were solved internally.

In the course of this two-line struggle, ATM, IWK and STT all correctly struggled with us not to get over-internalized, and to see that our own rectification could not be separated from the struggle to take up the tasks of the movement as a whole, to objectively sum up our history, to strive for unity with other Marxist-Leninists, and to provide revolutionary leadership to the masses.

The merger of ATM and IWK to form the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) had a tremendous impact on East Wind and the entire communist movement. After a while, the few who said East Wind was opportunist left the collective, while the overwhelming majority of us emerged with a much clearer understanding of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought. We were more united than ever on the necessity to shoulder the responsibilities of party building. This led to a significant boost in our mass work and to a rapid development of the process of reaching unity with the League.

Forging unity with the League

East Wind has worked with the League, and previously ATM and IWK, for many years. We fought shoulder to shoulder in the Little Tokyo redevelopment struggle, in the struggle to build the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition, in the Wabash-Fickett tenants struggle, in work places, in building support for the striking

Stearns miners, and other areas. We learned a lot about the line and practice of the League. We have seen the League strive to integrate its line with the actual conditions of the struggle — whether it be in building support for the struggles of the third world and exposing the superpowers, or in showing in practice why workers of all nationalities must unite in a common struggle, or in helping to expose opportunism in a living and mass way, through the course of struggle. We also saw and were impressed by the methodical and persevering style of day-to-day mass work that characterizes the League.

We have always united wholeheartedly with the League's consistent stand in support of the theory of three worlds, and in supporting socialist China in its struggle against the "gang of four" and to realize the four modernizations.

At the same time, our experiences made us acutely aware of our limitations as a small collective, especially in developing a broader understanding of the important political questions facing Marxist-Leninists in the U.S.

Of course, we also had our differences, and at times struggle was sharp. But eventually, because we were able to keep the overall interests of the revolutionary movement in mind, we were able to clearly define our differences, assess our respective shortcomings and strengths in a sober way, and reach unity. The League was especially helpful in assisting us to objectively sum up our history, and to stand firmly on the contributions we have made.

Our joint work with the League was very rewarding, and at once, sobering and uplifting. We began to understand not only in our heads, but actually felt in our guts, what it really means to say "the road is full of twists and turns, but the future is bright." We are proud of our history in the revolutionary mass movements and the communist movement. This pride becomes redoubled in our decision to dissolve and unite with the League. We are confident that as a single organization, we will be able to contribute more to the task of building a vanguard party to lead the people's struggle to overthrow monopoly capitalism. □

Statement by the New York Collective on Uniting with the League

June, 1979

The New York Collective, a small Marxist-Leninist collective, has decided to dissolve itself and merge with the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L). The Collective and the League (and before as ATM and IWK) have held discussions and carried on joint practice since 1976.

Our historic roots are from the Puerto Rican national movement and independence movement. Up until 1976 we were influenced by the "Revolutionary Wing" circle and its metaphysics, idealism, dogmatism and sectarianism. The August 29th Movement (M-L) was particularly important in helping guide our motion forward. We held principled discussions and struggle with the comrades from ATM and united with ATM's criticisms of the "Wing."

Some of our recent practice has included active participation in the struggle against cutbacks and attacks on special programs in the City College of New York and supporting the defense of Vicente "Panama" Alba, a Puerto Rican revolutionary nationalist fighter who has been the target of state repression. We have been active in the New York Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Nationalist Prisoners, and in community work in Williamsburg, a community of primarily Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in Brooklyn, New York.

Our experience acquired through practice and discussions with the League showed us the principled way in which they wage struggle within the communist movement as well as their correct stands

in the working class, national and other mass movements. The League has always been honest and consistent with us and treated our collective as equals. They have been helpful in summing up and struggling against the "Revolutionary Wing" and Workers Viewpoint Organization, both of which have played a serious wrecking role in the New York area.

The decision to dissolve the New York Collective and join the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) is based on the need of Marxist-Leninists to unite and advance the task of party building. We realized that our level of political unity was more advanced than our state of actual relations, that is, being separate organizations. We also realized that based on our level of political unity and our limitations as a small collective there was no basis for us to exist as a separate organization.

We recognize the line of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) as the leading line in the communist movement today and its principled stand of putting the interests of the revolutionary movement above its own organizational interests.

We feel that our merger is a step forward in building unity with Marxist-Leninists and party building and in other tasks facing Marxist-Leninists in this country. □

Other Publications Available:

- **Statements on the Founding of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (Marxist-Leninist)** (this book includes a statement on the merger process and political line of the League as well as the histories of the August 29th Movement (M-L) and I Wor Kuen. Available in English or new Spanish edition.) \$2.50
- **Build Support for the Farm Workers' Struggle** (selected articles from *UNITY* newspaper, English/Spanish) 25¢
- **Chinese American Workers: Past and Present** (anthology of articles) \$2.50
- **Normalization of U.S.-China Relations and Deng Xiaoping's U.S. Visit** (an analysis by the League of Deng's U.S. visit, as well as two *UNITY* reprints on China's modernization and socialist democracy) 25¢
- **Speech by Deputy Prime Minister Ieng Sary of Democratic Kampuchea at the 33rd Session of the UN General Assembly, October 12, 1978** (This important speech given just before the full scale Vietnamese invasion outlines Kampuchea's views on international and domestic questions. Speech translated by Group of Kampuchean Residents in America.) 50¢
- **Countries Want Independence, Nations Want Liberation, People Want Revolution** (articles on the international situation) \$1.00

SOON TO BE PUBLISHED

- **A Century of Struggle: A Revolutionary View of Chinese in America** (new book by the League)
- **Study Guide on the Theory of Three Worlds** (reprinted from *UNITY* newspaper, these articles address frequently asked questions on the theory of three worlds using examples from the current international situation.)
- **Chicano National Question** (position of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L) available in English/Spanish.)

UNITY

NEWSPAPER OF THE LEAGUE OF
REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE (M-L)

UNITY, the newspaper of the League of Revolutionary Struggle (M-L), is published bi-weekly in English/Spanish and English/Chinese editions. In the June 1st issue (Vol II, no. 11), **UNITY** expanded to 28 pages. With this expansion, there are some changes being made on the English/Spanish and English/ Chinese editions.



The Spanish edition highlights more articles about the struggle of Chicanos, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and other Latino peoples in the U.S., and in Latin America. Most of these will also appear in the English edition.

The English/Chinese edition has expanded coverage of issues facing the Asian American nationalities. It also contains a regular one-page Asian/Pacific Islander news supplement in English. This special news supplement *only* appears in the English/Chinese edition, not the English/Spanish.

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UNITY, P.O. Box 26229, San Francisco, CA 94126

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